A FRENCHWOMAN'S NOTES ON THE WAR

A FRENCHWOMAN'S NOTES ON THE WAR

BY

CLAIRE DE PRATZ

AUTHOR OF "FRANCE FROM WITHIN," ETC.

NEW YORK
E·P·DUTTON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
1916

Printed in England

BRAHMA MISSION
LIBRARY

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED TO

LADY BUNTING

WITH TENDER AFFECTION AND REGARD

188,280
June 25, '53
940.3 - P886

FOREWORD

We who are now actually living through the terrible hours of this Great War will never be in complete and accurate possession of all its details. These will be truly known only to the generations who come after us, long after we have passed away. . . . For we, of French race, who will have suffered and endured every anguished hour of the brutal invasion, and will have felt it so poignantly in our hearts and lives, will have lived not only in too close proximity to the war, but will have been part of it ourselves, so that its influence will have touched us too keenly for us to be able to judge the diverse facts of it with sufficient aloofness.

Those generations who come later will alone be able to elucidate, to examine, and to appreciate, those events which now so dominate us that they confuse our judg-

ment and alter the very quality of our vision. Our descendants alone will possess the entire truth, for the great epoch-making events of history can only be judged impartially from a distance, and by those who have taken no part in them. We, the spectators of the drama, cannot adequately appreciate facts, not being competent to weigh dispassionately the motives which caused them.

Also—let it be remarked—we, who are the spectators of the greatest war that history has ever known, possess but incomplete War news, greatly censored. The bare official information yielded to us day by day consists of separate items of news from our immense battlefield, 500 miles long, and these—as presented to us—appear to be independent of one another, having no apparent cohesion or interdetermination between them. It is only occasionally—indeed, very rarely—that some sentence in a *communiqué* reveals to us, in a flash, some general point of view.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these adverse conditions, which keep us in relative ignorance of events, we, alone, throughout

history will be known as the Contemporaries of the Unique War, and it is through the emotions we are now feeling that we will communicate to the future generations the tragic sense and meaning of this great event; for we alone shall have experienced every moment of its agony, having realized its immensity and fathomed its depths. Even if we are unable to appreciate the relative and intrinsic value of its daily occurrences, they will have affected us more deeply than if we had learnt of them by hearsay. Ours will be the sad privilege of impressing upon the coming generations the calamitous bewilderment of these awful hours, and the depth and intensity of our present emotions will guide the historians of the future. . . . Even though the *aperçu* of each of us may be too limited to admit of a general survey, yet it is the total sum of our present experiences, sufferings, and fluctuating hopes which will constitute our contribution to the history of modern mankind.

CL. DE P.

PARIS,
December, 1914—*June*, 1915.

PART I

PAGE

From the End of June to the End of September, 1914 - - - 1

PART II

I. Why France was Unprepared for War 162

II. The Quality of the French Fighting Spirit - - - - 185

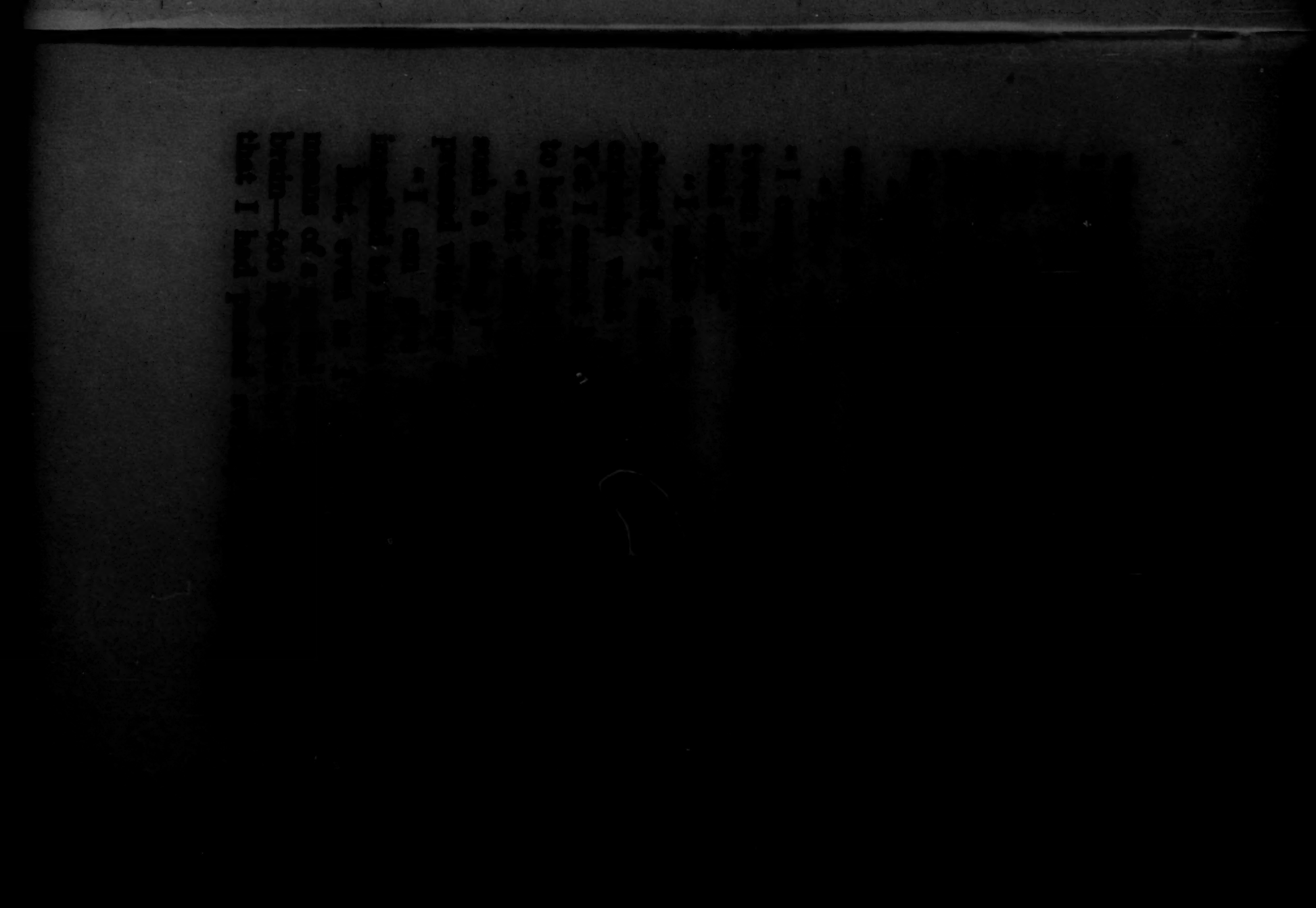
III. The Influences of the War upon National Character - - 208

IV. The Women's Part in the War - 263

June 28th, at Sarajevo, in Servia, the Archduke and Archduchess of Austria were assassinated. And this event—so remote from all thought of a general European war—was yet to be made the basis of the flimsy pretext used by Austria to attack Servia, and to lead to the general conflagration.

I was seated in the garden of a peaceful little inn, overlooking the sea, in the early afternoon of June 29th, when the news of the crime of Sarajevo came to us. A chance number of the *Petit Parisien* had been brought into the village by a lady with whom I was slightly acquainted, and who was staying at the inn. It was after lunch, and the empty coffee cups had not yet been cleared away from the small green tables in the garden. The news had been abruptly telegraphed from Vienna on the evening of the 28th. Considering the lateness of the hour, and the immediate need of printing the paper, the telegram had merely been inserted, together with the portraits of the victims, and it had been possible to add but few comments.

When I look back across the space of a few months, I cannot even yet understand



deduction to another, and had inferred that the Archduke's immediate successor was but little known in Europe. He was a young and inexperienced boy, and, even though he might be quite well-meaning, he was so far unprepared for kingship, being not yet trained to realize the heavy responsibilities incumbent upon him. I had therefore probably concluded—rightly or wrongly—that the young Archduke would be a dangerous successor to a better prepared and more experienced man.

A month later my curious prophecy came back to my mind, and though it never became apparent that the influence of the new Austrian heir was in any way responsible for the outbreak of war, yet the fact remained that Austria—with Germany at the back of her—*did* seek, in a certain measure, to make a pretext of the assassination at Sarajevo in order to explain her unwarranted demands upon Servia. However, since the beginning of the war, and since the production of the various Blue Books, Yellow Books, etc., it has now been realized how slight was the motive afforded by the tragedy enacted on June 28th.

A few days after this event I was installed in a fisherman's cottage, which I had taken for the season, a little way out of the village, high up on the softly rolling downs dominating the magic lace-work of fine and delicate rocks that so picturesquely edges the coastline of the country.

Opposite the cottage, on a neighbouring hill above the sea-coast, stood a white semaphore, which, with its mysterious poles, movable triangles, and floating pennons, looked like a huge skeleton ship, with intricate masts bereft of their sails. It stood clearly outlined against sky and sea, and to the left of it, on the crest of the hill, rose a high forest of pines, from the midst of which emerged the roof of an old grey manor-house.

My cottage consisted of two rooms. The principal one was a very large living-room, with whitewashed walls, dry mud floor, and a huge stone fireplace. There was a long, narrow table set at right angles before the window, flanked on either side by the benches upon which Breton families sit close, side by side, at their meals. There was a huge coffer near the fireplace, where

the fuel—both coal and wood—was kept, for one half of the wide hearth was occupied by a modern kitchen stove, and the other half was used for wood fires in connection with a tripod. There were two fine wooden bedsteads, each provided with white curtains, a large square red eiderdown—thoroughly modern bedsteads now so dear to the Breton housewife, which have replaced the far more picturesque and quaintly carved *lits clos.* There was also a large double-doored *armoire,* which contained many piles of snowy white linen; and, needless to say, this being the typical Breton cottage, the whitewashed walls around were adorned with pictures of saints, Crucifixions, and of the Virgin Mary.

Leading out of this room was the grand bedroom of the establishment, which also had a wooden bedstead with white curtains and a red eiderdown. Similar curtains of white dimity were at the windows, and the walls were adorned with gold-framed enlarged photographs of Marie-Louise Le B. —my landlady—in a fine new *coiffe,* and of her husband, a sailor in the State Navy. But the principal treasures in the room

were a hideous wooden clock—probably made in Germany!—and a fine Japanese tea service locked up in a buffet with glass doors, which Marie-Louise's husband had brought back with him from one of his journeys to the Far East.

I had made arrangements to have all my meals at the inn, though I had rented the cottage for the entire summer; for here I hoped to work in peace and quiet away from the noise of the village. Marie-Louise had arranged to come each day to do the housework, bring in the water from the well next door, and prepare my breakfast and afternoon tea. Through my landlady I got into touch with the lives of the peasants and fisherfolk that lived around me, and from them I learnt much concerning the ways and methods of thought of the simple God-fearing Breton people. During the early days, when war was being problematically discussed, it was both refreshing and enlightening to listen to the talk of the village people, and to note the calm, simple manner in which they faced the eventuality of a war in which most of the men would be engaged, while the women

would remain at home to do the work of the men added to their own.

Marie-Louise Le B. herself was a remarkable woman, quite typical of the Breton race. She was the daughter of a small farmer who owned a field, in the centre of which he had built his house. He had brought up his children on the produce of this small piece of land. At his death the small property had been sold, according to French law, so that the proceeds might be divided between his three daughters. Each of these had married. Marie-Louise had chosen a young sailor, but, as her husband was often away at sea, the young couple had lived together only during those rare intervals when he was home upon leave. Marie-Louise had therefore spent the greater part of her married life alone with the two children that had been born of the marriage. All the more important steps concerning her own existence and that of her children she was forced to take upon her own responsibility, because her husband was always too far away to give her any advice. It was she who had, therefore, decided that she and her family would no

longer live in a hired cottage. It would be far better to own one's own house. Therefore she would build one for herself, which she would let furnished each summer season, until she should have earned sufficient money in rent to pay up the capital she would have to borrow in order to buy her new home. Having decided this, she therefore selected a piece of ground, purchased it, called in a builder, and with him discussed every detail concerning the building. The sum required to pay for the land and the cottage came to about 4,000 francs (£160), a very large sum in the estimation of a Breton peasant woman. Marie-Louise had not sufficient money in hand, for her husband's wages came only to a pound a week, and she herself could make but very little money with an occasional sale of vegetables from her garden or eggs from her chickens, or by a few hours' service each day in the villas of P. B. occupied during the summer.

She therefore appealed to an elder sister, who had married a rich farmer in Normandy, and was willing to dispose of some capital at a reasonable percentage.

It was at this stage of proceedings that she informed her husband of her intentions, laying before him by letter her reasons for building and her methods of payment, which were the following: She would live in the house all the year round with her children except during the two summer months, when she would go and stay with an aunt near by. Her cottage would let for eight or ten pounds a season, and thus each year she would be able to pay off a large portion of the borrowed sum with the interest.

In writing to her husband, she did not say, "May I do this?" She said, "I intend doing this."

The husband, however, evidently raised no objection, so Marie-Louise built her cottage and superintended all the details of its erection with a scrutinizing and critical eye. She had become accustomed, by the enforced long absences of her husband, to accept such grave responsibilities that she had acquired a firm and self-reliant spirit, a great belief in her own powers, and an aggressive sense of independence.

Having made all my arrangements for the

summer season, I set to work in my peaceful, pleasant cottage to begin writing a new book. But this was destined not to be finished—at least, for the present—for soon real life became so much more fascinating, so much more enthralling, than imagined scenes and destinies. I was to witness here the result of a series of most momentous events, taking place on the other side of France, but imprinting their seal profoundly upon the old and sturdy population of Brittany—as, indeed, upon all parts of France at that moment—fusing their diverse spirits into one great national spirit, and making France at one with herself more completely, more cohesively, than she has perhaps ever been before at any moment of her history. These mighty influences were disconcertingly rapid in their manifestations, and those people who were in France during the few portentous days between July 25th and August 2nd, 1914, witnessed one of the most sudden and complete upheavals of national character.

The diverse phases of this rapid upheaval passed through the various and often conflicting emotions of consternation, revolt, apprehension, anxiety, followed by a resolute

acceptance of realities, and resulting in a courageous resolve and fierce, inexorable determination. And, however surprising it may appear to superficial observers of French character, these varied transitions were passed through without exultation, excitement, gesticulation, or useless rhetoric.

I was particularly fortunate to find myself in this small corner of the Breton coast in this auspicious moment, for here were gathered together a mixed set of people which, though restricted in numbers, might have been considered as almost entirely representative of the social elements that compose the French nation, had there been any representatives among them of the commercial or industrial population.

The native population, besides a few old aristocratic Breton families, were mainly peasant proprietors, fishermen living on the proceeds of their hauls, sailors—either retired upon their pension or in actual State service, and home upon leave—and a large contingent of men in the merchant service. The floating summer population was composed of a certain number of rich families, living in their châteaux or manor-houses during the

summer months, of residents staying in villas rented for the season, and particularly of a large sprinkling of professional and literary people—artists and political men—most of whom had cottages or houses of their own in the neighbourhood, although many took villas for the season, or stayed for a few weeks at the larger hotel. Among the latter were two English families, friends of mine, in whose company I had already spent the summer of the year before in this same village.

I consider myself fortunate to have found myself in such a community of varied interests at such a time. It gave me a wider scope both for analyzing and generalizing. In Paris and in the larger towns we are inclined to live in cliques or grooves, and to exchange ideas only with those whose minds are already well known to us because they are similar to our own. But when staying away from home we are apt to foregather with all classes and conditions of people.

I knew the various elements which composed this small community sufficiently well to be able to enter completely into the lives and minds of the friends of all classes whom

I knew here, having spent three months in this delightful spot during the summer of 1913. Indeed, some very old friends of fifteen years' standing, composed of husband and wife and three daughters, who had settled here definitely some eight years before, and made it their permanent home, had put me into direct touch with the permanent residents and customary summer visitors, as well as with the peasant population, in whom, as ardent Socialists, they were greatly interested. But there were other types of French thinkers here besides my Socialist friends—others who stood for the Radicals of French parliamentarism, others for the intellectual *bourgeoisie* of France, others for mere democracy; while the old Breton landlords of the country around were Legitimists and Clericals of the purest white banner.

Although there were no representatives here of the working classes or business urban classes, it would have been impossible to find a locality more completely representative of the conflicting ideals, each equally sincere and respect-worthy, of France in the first half of 1914.

But after the breath of strong emotion which followed the invasion of the Mother-Country had passed over these various conflicting small groups, all differences were forgotten, and there remained only one large family of human beings, of Frenchmen, all united in the one great love of *La Patrie*. If one examines this magic force, which instantaneously ended all quarrels, as the fierce rising sun instantaneously dissolves the thin snows that lie upon the surface of the mountain-tops, one will find that the origin of the impetus that united all the people of France so spontaneously, so unanimously, lay partly in the apprehension of actual invasion, for the awful memory of 1870 was still ever living in the hearts and minds of all Frenchmen, and partly in the strong leaping together, hand in hand, towards hope in the ideal of *La Revanche*.

A great effort of self-examination as well as outward observation was required in order to discern, in the midst of the rapid, kaleidoscopic succession of events at this time, the accompanying succession of emotions, revolts, and passions, which they aroused, and which eventually so influenced the French national

character that it appeared almost entirely transformed.

I will try to explain these processes as they passed in my own mind. From what I am able to judge by repeated observations, my own state of mind at this particular moment entirely typified the state of mind of the great majority of my compatriots.

The first event—as I have already said—which first suggested to me thoughts of war was the news of the assassination at Sarajevo on June 28th. A curious yet prompt and keen flash of clairvoyant foresight had led me to believe that this event would be transformed into some sort of an excuse for hostilities.

The next event which troubled my spirit took place on July 13th, when Senator Humbert, of the Meuse department, made his famous speech in the Senate House, fully documented and supplied with incontrovertible facts, showing that, should war be suddenly declared, it would be found that the French military authorities would not be prepared. At that time, in all conversations among my friends in the Breton village, doubts were expressed—on all sides and

by all kinds of people—as to the advisability and opportuneness of the Senator's declarations. Generally speaking, he was judged unwise to have made public certain truths, because such revelations were dangerous in that they strengthened Germany's belief in France's unpreparedness.

On July 20th M. Poincaré made an official visit to St. Petersburg, and the two allies, France and Russia, exchanged the amenities usual upon such occasions.

Meanwhile the Servian question was growing serious. Not only were the older and deeper differences between the two countries still pending, but Austria had made the Servian Government responsible for the assassination at Sarajevo, and had taken advantage of this crime—which she imputed to Servia—to make humiliating proposals to the smaller country.

On July 23rd, in spite of Servia's humble attitude—which was probably advised by England, France, and Russia—Austria sent an ultimatum to Servia!

To the amazement of all Europe, on July 25th Servia replied in humble acquiescence with the outrageous and humiliating de-

mands of Austria. Servia's submissive note was officially handed in on July 25th, at 5.45 in the evening. Yet, notwithstanding this, the Austrian Ambassador, Baron Giesl, at 6.30 p.m.—that is, three-quarters of an hour later—sent in his reply (evidently prepared beforehand), declaring that he did not accept the Servian answer, and left Belgrade at once.

Here it became clear to all that Austria was acting under strong pressure, evidently from Germany. But also it was known that Russia would not allow Servia to be treated with such contumely. In all conversations henceforth, it was apparent that what was happening was not altogether a mystery—that Russia, in helping to defend Servia, would inevitably draw in her ally France, perhaps even England, though this was not yet sure. And Austria's mobilization necessarily meant Germany's. The actual hostilities between Austria and Servia began on July 27th, and war was officially declared on July 28th, though it appeared evident that the Austrian military authorities had been preparing long before the 25th of the same month!

Meanwhile in Paris, the Caillaux case—that trial of calumny and shame—was progressing. It ended abruptly, being brought to a rapid close by the strong rumours of war that stirred the air. In a *confrontation* between M. Bernstein, the playwright, and M. Caillaux, it will be remembered that M. Bernstein exclaimed in words to this effect:

"I beg to remind M. Caillaux that, if war is declared—as it probably will be within the next few days (I personally shall be mobilized on the fourth day)—that a man goes to the war himself and shoots with his own rifle! He cannot send a woman there to take his place!"

This was in allusion to what M. Bernstein considered as M. Caillaux's responsibility in the murder of M. Calmette by Mme Caillaux.

It is strange that this amazingly scandalous case should have taken place just exactly before the war. It was as if certain political *coteries* of the French Republic—which, alas! were often the most powerful—had reached their zenith of cynicism and lawlessness at the precise moment when the soul of

France was about to be regenerated! It is always darkest before dawn. . . .

It would appear clear now, by comparing the various official documents since published by the British, Russian, and German Governments, that Austria, had she been left to herself, invited thereto by Russia, and pressed by England, France, and Italy, would have yielded and left Servia in peace once more. But it is evident that the strong power from behind Vienna was Berlin. It was thence the true decision came. History can now deal definitely with that fact.

On July 31st an ultimatum was addressed to St. Petersburg — not by Austria, the Power directly implicated—but by Germany. This meant war irrevocably. From various documents again compared, it appears clear that military operations had been absolutely decided upon in a Council held at Potsdam on the evening of July 29th. Whether it was the direct wish of the Kaiser himself, or whether it was the pressure put upon him by the military authorities, which carried his ultimate decision, is not yet known.

On Wednesday, July 29th, I was sitting in

the garden, in front of my cottage; I could do no work, for I was too much disturbed in spirit. I had been down in the village, and had spoken to various friends there—some University professors, a famous and well-known writer, and my English friends, two entire families—who were staying at the village hotel. Of course there had been but one subject of conversation between us.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, two peasant girls passed down the lane at the end of my cottage garden. One of them held a newspaper that had flown open. The two children were laughing and talking, evidently quite unconscious of what was printed in the large headlines of the paper which one of them held, and was probably about to deliver at the house of some Parisian visitor to P. B. As she passed my garden gate, I saw that the paper she held, the *Ouest-Éclair*—a local paper printed at Rennes during the night, and containing the telegrams from the evening Paris journals—bore headlines in large letters, consisting of these words: "Russia declares War upon Austria."

It seemed to me that in that moment my heart stood still, for it was then that I

France was about to be regenerated! It is always darkest before dawn. . . .

It would appear clear now, by comparing the various official documents since published by the British, Russian, and German Governments, that Austria, had she been left to herself, invited thereto by Russia, and pressed by England, France, and Italy, would have yielded and left Servia in peace once more. But it is evident that the strong power from behind Vienna was Berlin. It was thence the true decision came. History can now deal definitely with that fact.

On July 31st an ultimatum was addressed to St. Petersburg — not by Austria, the Power directly implicated—but by Germany. This meant war irrevocably. From various documents again compared, it appears clear that military operations had been absolutely decided upon in a Council held at Potsdam on the evening of July 29th. Whether it was the direct wish of the Kaiser himself, or whether it was the pressure put upon him by the military authorities, which carried his ultimate decision, is not yet known.

On Wednesday, July 29th, I was sitting in

the garden, in front of my cottage; I could do no work, for I was too much disturbed in spirit. I had been down in the village, and had spoken to various friends there—some University professors, a famous and well-known writer, and my English friends, two entire families—who were staying at the village hotel. Of course there had been but one subject of conversation between us.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, two peasant girls passed down the lane at the end of my cottage garden. One of them held a newspaper that had flown open. The two children were laughing and talking, evidently quite unconscious of what was printed in the large headlines of the paper which one of them held, and was probably about to deliver at the house of some Parisian visitor to P. B. As she passed my garden gate, I saw that the paper she held, the *Ouest-Éclair*—a local paper printed at Rennes during the night, and containing the telegrams from the evening Paris journals—bore headlines in large letters, consisting of these words: "Russia declares War upon Austria."

It seemed to me that in that moment my heart stood still, for it was then that I

was certain that my worst fears would be realized, and that war would soon be declared between France and Germany. I rushed into the lane and begged the girl to lend me the paper for one moment. I felt that I was deathly pale, and the two children looked at me with a frightened expression. I read the telegrams hurriedly, and learnt that hostilities were already in progress between Austria and Servia, and that Russia, having declared war upon Austria, was now preparing to defend the smaller Slavonic State!

This meant war for France, who was bound to join Russia. But it seemed at that moment almost incredible that a great European conflict should result from so small a cause. I could hardly analyze my own deep emotion, and the nervous strain which resulted in that anguished hour. . . .

I gave the newspaper back to the girl with a trembling hand, and immediately walked back into the village. I could remain in my cottage no longer. I needed to talk with somebody and to hear other opinions.

At first I ran down to the hotel, and there I found my English friends somewhat

affected by my alarm. But what amazed me was that they did not seem personally anxious. They did not appear to think that war for France would inevitably follow even yet, and considered it extremely improbable that in such circumstances England would be implicated. In trying to convince them, I am afraid that I only gave them the impression still more deeply that I was over-excited. Many French friends, too, whom I met that day, considered my judgment hasty, and refused to believe war possible upon such grounds. Nevertheless, conversations were, of course, warm upon the subject, and there were the groups of pessimists and optimists, fully characterized even at that date. The only one whom I found filled with the same quality of anxiety as myself was a famous biologist of the Collège de France, a man celebrated for his scientific research throughout the world. He felt convinced then, as I did, that in a very few days Germany would invade France, though both of us—at that time—believed that the invasion would take place upon our eastern frontier. There were several well-known writers staying in P. B. at this

date, among them a literary critic and a poet who had their summer residences in the village. I questioned them. The poet was determined to remain resolutely optimistic to the end; the critic refused to give any frank opinion, although he admitted that the situation was extremely grave. I asked him to give me some advice concerning the advisability of my own immediate return to Paris, but he would give me no definite counsel.

After my walk through the village I went back to my cottage, more disturbed than ever in my mind. Yet I determined to take strong practical measures in view of a sudden outbreak of hostilities; for many of the material difficulties which cripple the people of a nation in war time would inevitably assail me here in this remote village, and perhaps keep me a prisoner with very limited funds for an indefinite period. The thought was not to be tolerated. And now any delay might result in a financial catastrophe. I therefore immediately wrote a long letter to a Paris friend. In this letter I enclosed a cheque for a fairly large sum, drawn upon my Paris bank, begging

her to cash it at once, and to keep the money for me until I should send her further directions. I was becoming more and more convinced that hostilities would be declared very shortly. I knew that, in the event of war, the banks in Paris would stop the payment of all cheques, and I wanted to be sure not to be left stranded so far from home without means of subsistence. Although all the people who discussed war agreed in saying war would be short, though severe, I wished to protect myself even against a probably long period of hostility. So I made the cheque as large a one as possible. Further events showed me how wisely I had acted.

Two days later, on July 31st, I received news from my friend acknowledging the cheque which she had not yet cashed. In her letter she remonstrated with me, and insisted that it was absurd to fear war.

"I assure you," she wrote, "that you are needlessly anxious. War is not as imminent as you seem to imagine, and you will have plenty of time to withdraw your money yourself, without burdening me with the responsibility of it. If you saw Paris as it is

now, so calm and so evidently unexpectant of war, you would have no fear. Surely you must be surrounded by people who influence you strangely, and I am astonished that a woman of your character can be so ill advised. You are probably living among a set of very simple, ignorant people, who allow themselves to be frightened by the tone of the newspapers."

She herself had evidently quoted her opinion from one of the most optimistic papers, resolved not to spread a panic among the people. Twenty-four hours later it was impossible throughout France to find change for a banknote of either one hundred or of fifty francs.

I remember taking up my pen and writing to her in rather an impatient mood: "My dear, I asked you to do me a service which I consider vitally important to me. I did not ask you for any advice upon the subject. *Please* cash my cheque *at once* directly you receive this letter, whatever happens, whatever you may have to do, or whatever your opinions may be. Let me implore you to do the same for yourself, for in a few days, or even hours, it may be too late. Then the

banks will be closed, and you will find yourself stranded without any money, perhaps for months."

So certain was I that I was right that I backed up this note with a telegram urging her to act immediately. I am mentioning these facts in detail merely to show with what incredible rapidity events followed one another, and also because it is interesting to note how much some people required *waking up* before they could be made to realize that hostilities were actually about to take place.

Fortunately, my friend immediately executed the imperative and reiterated order contained in my telegram.

A few days later I received from her a contrite and regretful note, in which she said: "How I wish I had done as you did—and as you advised me to do at the time—and had taken out my own money! I can get none now. One cannot even obtain any change for banknotes, and, with a hundred-franc note in one's pocket, one can get nothing to eat!"

Meanwhile my English friends at the hotel were enjoying their holiday, organizing tea-parties upon the rocks, and probably

finding me a most tiresome companion. In extenuation of my constant references to war, I explained to them what a war would mean to me and to all France. In my own family my three brothers and seven first cousins would start out as combatants upon the first and second days. Every single French family without exception would contribute soldiers to the war, and thus the whole social and national life of the country would be paralyzed or crippled. Commerce and industry would come to a dead stop; artistic life in all its manifestations would momentarily collapse, and all the horrors of 1870 would be known to us once more. Though I had not witnessed the first Franco-German War myself, I had been bred and educated in the recital of all its horrors, and, like every French man or woman of my generation, I had fiery hopes of *La Revanche* in my blood, though I had never failed to realize what the price would be. In my mind, in spite of my alarm for my own people and all my friends, I felt a leaping, exultant elation at the thought of possible vengeance.

I tried to bring home to my English

friends—so happily safe in their tight little island—all that the invasion of one's country could mean to a civilized human being. And I think in the end I convinced them.

I remember saying to one of them, in order to explain to him the present fervour and excitement of my spirit: "You happy English people, who live in an island, may perhaps find it difficult to realize the point of view of the people of France, whose barriers are so frail and artificial. Here is Germany—our bitterest, cruellest, most envious foe—living on the other side of a purely imaginary frontier. We have no natural defence against the enemy, who can invade us at any moment. We have but the wall built up of the breasts of our sturdy sons!

"Do you realize what invasion means? Do you not realize what bombardment of a town means? Can you represent to yourself the emotions of a man who sees the home that he or his forefathers have built up laboriously, which encloses and encompasses all his earthly and emotional treasures—his home, his hearth, his wife, his family, the temple where he prays, the room where

he sleeps—all ruthlessly blown into atoms, in the space of a moment, by a bitter enemy ?"

I remember that my friend's very earnest and thoughtful face clouded over with deep reflection at my question. It was evident that he was trying to take some lofty and intellectual point of view before making any answer.

In order to bring home to him the deep, vibrant horror which such thoughts evoked in my French soul—conscious of humiliation known in the past—I said to him : " Try to make a great effort of imagination; suppose, for instance, that several German ships have bombarded and destroyed Liverpool ?"

I was looking at my friend's face as I spoke, and I saw a sudden wave of quivering emotion spread over it for a few seconds —for just that infinitesimal space of time which elapses before even the most practised Englishman can rein in his emotion. In that flash of time his face was suffused with a glow of colour. Every feature was relaxed, as if suddenly released from an elastic spring, but in that second I saw that my shot had not missed its mark. He had under-

stood my question now, and having realized it he himself had felt, in imagination, that instinctive tremor of revolt that a man feels when he learns that his country has been attacked.

It was that particular quality of revolt bred from a sense of outrage, and alert with a keen desire for revenge, which I saw on my friend's face at that moment. It is that same thirst for vengeance that now inspires every French soldier and evokes his fighting spirit.

At the moment I am writing (the bombardment of Scarborough has just taken place) one cannot yet tell to what extent England may yet be roused; but recent events tend to show that the same *élan* that has animated the whole French nation from the first hour of the mobilization now animates the English, though perhaps the Frenchman's vigorous zest of hatred is still more acute, because part of his country is still under the heel of the oppressor, and also because he remembers past humiliations. The Englishman, happily for him, has not experienced them. May he never have occasion to suffer them!

A few moments after this conversation several of the English party were accompanying me back to my cottage, and discussions were still rife on the subject of war.

Suddenly one of them asked me:

"If war is really to be declared in a few days' time, as you believe to be so probable, how do you think the whole French nation will accept a declaration of war? How will the people about here—the peasant and fisher folk—accept the news and receive their marching orders? Will they go off willingly to the war, eagerly, joyfully, like free men? or will they merely go out to fight because they are forced to be soldiers—legally—under penalty of being shot if they refuse?"

"The French nation at large will march to the front like a single man. Of that I'm sure," I replied, "in spite of all their internal differences of opinion. At present the entire nation is as if stupefied with the new idea so suddenly thrust before them, by unexpected events. They have received a sudden shock, and, for the moment, can hardly believe what has happened. But have no

doubt, my friend: there will not be a moment's hesitation! The reality of war, which had almost been forgotten during long years, has suddenly reappeared before them. To the present generation it had only been apparent at times, and had disappeared anew, to be forgotten once more in the uprising tide and stress of life.

"Thus war scares have passed on. But now the people are beginning to be conscious that they are faced by a reality. The moment they fully realize what is happening, the whole nation will rise up spontaneously, like a single man, and rush into war, conscious only of one thought—*La Revanche!* At last! Each French home, rich or poor, whatever its own particular creeds or ideals may be, will instantly send forth its sons. No compulsion will be necessary. It will be an eager, spontaneous gift to *La Patrie.*

"But it will be more convincing to let the people round here answer that question for themselves," I continued. "Here are two men coming towards us now, returning from the village. Let us question them. We will learn their opinion from themselves."

The two men, brothers of a family of seven, were young married men, who, with their wives and children, lived in two cottages side by side upon the moor. They had three brothers, younger than themselves, who had all done their military service, and two sisters, married to sailors in the State Navy. In case of war, the five brothers and two brothers-in-law were due to start on the first or second day of the mobilization.

The elder of the two men, Jean, an *inscrit maritime*, lived by his fishing. He had just finished selling his daily haul in the village, and carried an empty basket. His brother, Yves, was a small farmer who tilled his own land and lived upon its produce. He had been tying up the oats and barley in his field, and hoeing potatoes. Over his shoulder he carried his field implements. My friends and I nodded "Good-evening" to the men.

"These are two of the peaceful inhabitants of the country, whose opinions may interest you," I said, addressing my English friends. And I stopped the men.

"Well, *mes enfants*, what is your opinion?

Is it to be war this time or not, do you think?" I asked.

It was the blue-eyed, curly-haired Jean, the fisherman, who first replied:

"We none of us want war. We haven't even been expecting it. The fellows down in the harbour all say that, and God knows it's true enough!" He turned to his brother, as if asking for confirmation of his words. Yves nodded a reply.

And Jean continued: "But if war is forced upon us by the beastly Boches, or if they make it so impossible for us that to insist on peace would be a humiliation for our country, then '*Allons-y donc!*' like a single man. Our wives and children must manage without us for a time, while we are off to give the Germans a trouncing they will not forget!"

"Yes," nodded his brother.

"We will brag about it less than in 1870, perhaps. We won't begin by crying out, '*A Berlin!*' But this time we'll get there!"

"Surely it's our turn this time," put in his brother, quietly.

"And you mean to say," asked one of my English friends in his halting French,

which, however, was perfectly comprehensible to the two Bretons, "that if in a few days Germany attacks France, and war is declared, you all will be ready and willing to leave your home and families, and your crops, which are just coming in so well, after you have worked so hard at them all these months? And you"—turning to the fisherman—"will you be ready to abandon your fishing at the very moment of the year when it is the most lucrative, just when you are earning food and clothing for your family for the coming winter?"

"*Mais certainement, monsieur!*" replied Jean, the fisherman—"*mais certainement! Il le faut bien!* If anybody attacked your mother, you would go and defend her, wouldn't you? The mother of all French men, *c'est La Patrie!*"

And both men remained silent, awaiting any further questions that might be put to them, but finding nothing further themselves to say upon the subject.

A few moments later they were trudging up the hill towards their home.

"These," I said, turning to my friends, "symbolize the spirit of France at this

hour. Nobody here has asked for war; but in each home the men are ready to start at once and do their duty to the best of their ability."

The English party was silent for a few moments.

"I like your Breton peasants better than your Caillaux set," said one of the women in the party suddenly.

"Thank Heaven," I answered fervently, "that it is those who constitute by far the larger number of the French nation! The Caillaux set is but an infinitesimal portion of the whole, believe me. When all France gathers around the flag, in a few days, you will see that so negligible a quantity will merge into the masses of the whole, and will no more influence the national spirit than a single drop of ink, spilt into the sea out yonder, would change its colour."

I think that my English friends, who, like so many other neighbours of France, were misled by books and papers, which give only a superficial explanation of the French character, were inclined to disbelieve me even then. But since that day they have changed their opinion.

Later that same afternoon I called upon a charming French lady, the wife of a well-known writer, who owned the delightful old manor-house, surrounded by pine woods on the edge of the sea, close to the semaphore.

I found her engaged upon her maternal duties, for, like the sweet French *maman* she is, she was presiding over her children's five o'clock tea, and helping their governess to cover large slices of crumby Breton bread with strawberry jam. The children, who had been playing in the garden all the afternoon, were chattering like gay and noisy monkeys. The homely family sight somewhat soothed me.

"Papa is out in his boat sailing," volunteered one of the children.

"I came up to see you this afternoon," I said to my friend, while the little ones were quieted with bread and jam, "because I feel so troubled and unhappy about this coming war."

She looked at me with an amazed expression.

"The coming war! You surely don't think that?" she exclaimed, as if the idea had only just struck her.

"Yes, I fear so," I said. "What does your husband say?"

"Oh, he doesn't say much about it. But I don't think he fears war, really. Calm yourself, my friend; I think you are making yourself unnecessarily unhappy."

But I insisted upon my fear, and remember saying to her: "But I can't help thinking of my brothers."

And then suddenly she, too, became anxious.

"I should have three nephews going out, and ever so many other relations," she began reflectively. Then, suddenly checking herself: "Oh, but I am sure there won't be war."

She was so determined to be hopeful herself that her optimism gained on me, and I walked back to my hotel dinner in a rather more peaceful spirit. For the young governess had chimed in reassuringly, too. She had also young male relations who would start at once, for every French family would contribute combatants.

When I returned to my cottage after dinner, I found that Marie-Louise, my sober-minded and capable landlady, had

already come in, and by the light of the oil-lamp was busy preparing my room and arranging the cottage for the night.

She was a dark-browed, serious-looking woman, tall and lean. She had a pale, clear skin, softly tanned, and her features were as severely regular as the profiles seen on certain old Greek coins. Always dressed in black, with a black apron, she wore, as usual, the white-winged coiffe of her country. She bowed to me as I entered, but did not say a word. She proceeded with her work in dignified and stern silence.

I did not speak, either, and apparently became occupied with arranging the books on my table. But meanwhile I was observing her. As she moved about the two rooms, intent upon her simple duties, I saw, though the expression of her features was calm and unmoved, that she was weeping. The heavy blistering tears that sprang from a sorely stricken heart were coursing slowly down her cheeks. There was something terribly and painfully sinister in the attitude of this silent weeping woman, whose hands performed their work so efficiently, even though her heart was breaking,

for she seemed to typify the womanhood of France in this sad hour!

I went close to her and put my arms round her shoulders.

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" she replied, in answer to my unspoken sympathy, "we are going to have war now, that is sure. My poor husband! I may be soon a widow, left alone with my two little ones!"

Her sailor-husband was on duty just off Toulon, on the *Ernest-Renan*, one of our large Dreadnoughts of the Mediterranean fleet.

And with what words could I comfort her?

All through the morning of August 1 we waited expectantly for news, but none came, for the postman was extremely late on that particular day. We felt that events were succeeding one another rapidly, and, although we had no definite news, we experienced the counter-shock of those events in the varying emotions through which we passed.

During the last few days, in our small village, which represented a miniature pre-

sentment of France herself, we had known periods of astonishment, consternation, revolt, alarm, and anxiety, each accompanied by an enervating impression of uncertainty and vagueness. Finally we had reached a state of desperation which led us to feel that anything would be preferable to the bewilderment running through all the other emotions, and to escape from the horrible feeling of suspense even the most peaceful of us had actually begun to wish for war. We were even conscious that if the alternative, at this eleventh hour, were to be peace, and *not* war, we should be rather disappointed than otherwise. Indeed, we *wanted* war now, and were anxious to know that mobilization would be decided upon.

The minds of all in the small village were entirely occupied by speculations upon the actual opening of hostilities, and were alternatively swayed by hopes and misgivings concerning the decisions of the Government. Would it decide to mobilize, or would it still temporize? On the one hand, mobilization would put a sudden and aggressive termination to any possible diplomatic settlement of the situation, but, on the

other, it would have the inestimable advantage of ending the perplexing dilemma. For uncertainty always seems more difficult to bear than the certainty, even, of a great disaster.

Evidently the French Government was now beginning to realize that secretly Germany had long been alert and prepared, and that France would be attacked before she was ready. We went through hours of poignant anguish, and events and emotions progressed so quickly that, long before the mobilization was made known, the general feeling was that *anything* would be better than the present state of anxiety.

In all the various *communes* around, orders had already been sent out by the Mayors informing the inhabitants that they must hold ready all motors, carriages, carts, and horses, likely to be commandeered, which therefore had to be declared at each *Mairie*. These orders had been complied with two days before. At the same time, nearly all the villas were being emptied. Hundreds of visitors at the bathing-stations along the coast had already left for Paris; for it was well understood that as soon as

general mobilization was decreed women and children would not be allowed in the trains, all railways being immediately and inevitably placed under the control of military law and reserved for combatants only. Many families who had taken villas for the season, and who had paid but half their rent—in the locality it is customary to pay half upon entering and the other half at the end of the stay—had left all their luggage and belongings in forfeit, and had departed abruptly with only the clothes they wore and the smaller handbags.

But in some cases the mothers of families of young children who thought it more prudent to remain away from Paris, not knowing what might happen, took measures to prolong their stay in the country or at the sea, while fathers, husbands, and brothers, were away at the front. Most families, however, were confident that the war would soon be over, and that in the autumn at latest all Parisians would be able to return to their town residences.

An amusing story is told of two ladies who left P. B. precipitately in their bathing dresses, still wet with sea-water, and merely

covered with their cloaks. Even their bathing headdress had not been removed. It appears they had not been told about the mobilization until very late, and were enjoying a swim in the sea half an hour before the last train available for women travellers left the small local station, so they were obliged to go just as they were or remain behind until after the mobilization. During the rare moments in which I had time to speculate on such frivolities, I wondered whether they did not catch severe colds!

At the midday meal in the hotel it was evident, in all the conversations which I heard, that the minds of people had gradually moved with incredible rapidity towards the conviction that war was now inevitable, and few believed that matters would be arranged diplomatically. I remember asking myself if, at the price of our present emotions, peace would be worth having, and even whether hopes of peace would not now revolt me more than hopes of war.

For, upon analyzing the condition of mind that had always existed in France since the beginning of my own life, I asked myself if I had ever known what

peace truly was. Those of my generation had always lived in a state of constant endurance and constraint, as if in apprehension of having to measure disproportioned forces with those of our enemy on the other side of the frontier.

This could not be considered a state of true peace. It certainly was not the wholesome, fruitful tranquillity of a nation going about its business and attending hopefully to its personal and intimate affairs. It was a condition of perplexed unrest and alert alarm. We had experienced war scares before to-day, but this time the entire nation felt that, whatever the coming war might be, it would at least do away, once and for all, with that intolerable state of mind that had dominated us all too long.

I realized intensely in these hours that such a quality of peace necessarily demanded a moral and spiritual subservience which the French nation would tolerate no longer, and I felt, as probably nearly all French people of my generation were feeling, that once and for all the particular attitude of mind which had formerly held us was now altered. It was then that I, who had hitherto be-

lieved myself to be pre-eminently a pacifist and a humanitarian, suddenly understood that all my most cherished intellectual convictions were being ruthlessly swept away by the instinctive uprising tide of my sense of "national honour," and, to my rather childlike amazement, that sense had suddenly and instantaneously annihilated all the strongest of my mental convictions.

Few among us indeed were ready for this sudden upheaval of our own souls, for few of us had perceived what was about to happen. In the provinces, in all the larger towns, among the factory and field workers, in most of the liberal professions, diligent French folk were intent upon their work in perfect security, little dreaming that meanwhile our enemies and neighbours were laboriously preparing. The Press had explained those political situations which might have enlightened the public—but insufficiently, so that the mass of the people were ignorant of the true state of affairs. And it is a strange fact, though a true one, that the ordinary conventional French mind does not appear to conceive that which is unusual, or to hope for any fate that is not

moderate and uneventful. Even though the hidden soul of the people is so heroic, the people themselves rarely expect great and heroic events. The French had gradually acquired the habit of alluding to war in conversation rather as mere argument or as a case in point than as an immediate or even possible reality. Even at this eleventh hour there were still people to be found trying to soothe their friends' anxiety by saying: "Oh, matters will surely be diplomatically arranged. Mobilization does not necessarily mean war. There have been instances when a country has mobilized its troops merely as a threat."

With the exception of the military contingent of the nation, whose duty it is to live in expectation of war, and of a few travelled people, whose minds were prepared for the idea of a coming struggle by the foreign books and newspapers they read, the mass of the people, including the governing classes and the heads of the great State departments, were brought to within a week of the event without having realized its proximity. This attitude proved an incomprehensible, and certainly reprehensible, in-

nocence in so old and logical a nation. Yet events have proved that its inner heart, in spite of all appearances, was well prepared for any disastrous destiny.

Meanwhile, though totally unconscious of the fact, the nation was being keenly measured, studied, watched, by the wily enemy, with a view to its ultimate extermination. Yet we cannot say that we were *entirely* ignorant of the fact, for we had been fully warned. But we had refused to believe that our country was undermined and sapped through and through by the enemy's spy system, and that even in time of peace an advance guard was established within our walls, which having assumed a disguise of friendliness concealed its preparation for murder.

The repeated denunciations of some of our Nationalist writers, which some of us considered fanatic, were only too true; yet we disregarded them, and thus were delivered into the hands of the enemy.

Nevertheless, in spite of their secret snares, we yet remained to them as a closed book. They misjudged us completely, for even the best trained spy cannot spy upon souls.

Their numerous cunning and well-paid body of informers (we have now learned that the pay of an ordinary spy was thirty shillings a week, and the work interfered in no way with ordinary occupations) knew everything concerning our material affairs—indeed, often more thoroughly and in detail than ourselves. But it would have required a finer quality of discrimination than they possessed to be able to judge the moral worth and the hidden qualities of so proud a nation. It was comparatively easy to ascertain the names and addresses, as well as information concerning the circumstances, of their prey; but it was more difficult to measure the probable reactions of French national character as well as its immaterial demands. They might compute to a pound what quantities of coal, of fodder, of sugar, might be hidden away in our houses, but they could not estimate what our national reserves of energy might be. So far as such insight was concerned, their meanest spies, as well as their most brilliant Ambassadors, were completely misled. A finer perception than can be dreamt of in all the German "kultur" would have been necessary for that.

Yet, in spite of the non-prevision of the Government in the hour of awakening, most State departments were admirably managed, and the mobilization was so deftly executed as to amaze all France's friends and neighbours. For non-prevision, which is a want of political foresight, does not necessarily mean non-preparation, which is a want of administrative foresight. And although the great State administrations which perform the practical management of the country are nominally under the control of the Government, they are more stable and longer-lived, and their work more durable and reliable. Thus, as soon as hostilities were apparently about to begin, these State administrations set to work almost automatically. Orders were given in all directions, and general mobilization was achieved with admirable discipline and in perfect mechanical progression which amazed, not only outsiders, but the mass of French people themselves. The transport of field artillery, the commissariat department, the commandeering of conveyances, etc., operated almost perfunctorily. One was

astonished, when the time came, to see how efficiently all these departments were conducted. To be fair to the Governmental authorities—if hitherto they had been too prone to mere talk—their prudence suddenly awoke with strenuous events, and became equal to the occasion. If they had not *foreseen*, at least, once brought face to face with the emergency, they organized everything with rapid proficiency, and were the first to give the example of the quick adaptability to circumstances which was shown throughout the whole nation at this juncture. Almost instantaneously urgent measures were taken to avoid any possibility of panic, riot, or revolt. The danger, too, that might arise from the appointment of military leaders by favour was foreseen at once, and imperative orders were given to prevent anarchy among those in authority. Indeed, almost as soon as the danger became apparent, every effort was made to obviate it.

It was about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, August 1st, 1914. Shall I ever forget the emotion of that hour and that

date? I was sitting at my writing-table before the open window of my cottage, trying in vain to collect a few scattered thoughts and to continue the story I had been engaged in writing. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining brightly, and the air was soft and balmy, though crisp, being blown inwards from over the open sea. Suddenly I heard myself called from the lane that ran past my garden:

"*Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! Voyez! Voyez!*"

I looked up, and just outside my gate there was a sailor standing—a blue-eyed and curly-haired young fellow whom I knew well, and who treated me as a friend, as did all the good folk of the moor above the sea. He was accompanied by his two little girls, tiny toddlers whose small golden heads "sunning over with curls" were the image of their father's. They stood on either side of him, and, like him, each carried a large empty basket; for the trio were going down to the beach to gather in a local kind of seaweed which, after being dried in the sun, would be used as fuel by the family in the winter.

"*Voyez!* . . ." he called again, and pointed in the direction of the semaphore which stood on the sloping hill just opposite to my cottage. My gaze followed the direction of his hand, but it was a few moments before I truly understood what I was looking at. Then it seemed that my heart had suddenly stopped beating. . . .

For there before me three pennons were slowly being hoisted up the flagstaff—three pennons of which I knew the portentous significance, for the signals had been explained to me several times during the last few days. Three pointed pennons, horizontally set, red, yellow, and red, as if to symbolize: Blood, Fire, and Blood! This was the order for the general mobilization of all the youngest, finest, strongest, most able-bodied men of France!

I looked at the sailor, but could not utter a word. He, too, was speechless. Evidently we both felt that words would have been unable to express all that we experienced in that moment. The little girls stood silent by their father's side, with the strange awed gaze of children perplexed by the inexplicable emotions of their elders. Then suddenly the man said, as if greatly relieved:

"*Alors, ça y est! . . .*"

"*Oui . . . ça y est! . . .*" I echoed more slowly.

"*Eh bien! . . . C'est entendu!*" and, nodding good-bye to me, he picked up his basket and proceeded on his way towards the beach.

For although he had just received the urgent summons of his country, and to-morrow morning, with all the others, he would start out to obey the sacred call, his work to-day must be done. The fuel for the winter must be gathered in. His wife, doubtless, would learn the news at her work at the village *lavoir*, and would return in good time so that, after the evening meal, she could get everything ready for his early start.

He made no comment, lost no time in useless remarks. He knew what his duty was. He was prepared to fulfil it without the slightest question. But the work in hand must be proceeded with nevertheless. So he turned, and, followed by his wondering children, soon disappeared from my sight.

It was only afterwards that I thought of his fine, simple manner on learning the

news. He would start on the morrow, perhaps never to return. His quiet courage was typical of all his race.

Meanwhile I felt as if stunned, and there was no conscious thought in my mind; for the news so ardently expected was like the blow which stuns one when, after having watched long beside the deathbed of a beloved friend, Death at last arrives. . . .

Of course mobilization meant war. There was not the slightest doubt about that in my mind, in spite of the specious optimism of some of my friends. I remember catching up my field-glasses, which lay on the table before me, and, carefully following all the details of the hoisting, I watched the red flames of war being run up on each side of the yellow flag. The order of their relative positions indicated the class of combatants to go out first. A few days later that order would be altered to indicate the calling out of older classes.

So here it was definitely settled at last—this great question which had been agitating us all so terribly during the last few days. This was the signal all France was fearing, expecting, hoping. Though I had been

awaiting it so anxiously, yet it was a shock. But in this case it was a shock that held in it an element, not only of release from suspense, but a sort of exultation; for the manifest reality immediately dispersed all lingering, festering doubt. It cleared the atmosphere of heart and brain, and filled the soul with a sudden, healthy, clean certainty. . . .

For two or three moments still I felt myself speechless — not so much with surprise as with emotion. There is a potent strength in the knowledge that a disaster has been definitely decided upon. All speculation was now at an end, and at last it had come—this event I had so ardently dreaded all my life, with all the strength of my heart as well as the strength of my brain, and yet which now I as ardently desired.

The excitement that stirred me was almost unbearable. I could no longer remain quiet or be alone. I longed to speak with fellow human beings, and to share the great emotions I was now experiencing with others who would feel as I felt. . . . Although I was incapable of

realizing it at that time, I had become a living part of the great soul of my nation. I no longer possessed an individual soul, for a widened, immense spirit dwelt within me, which I shared with others of my race and blood.

I set out for the village without a hat, leaving my cottage door open, and flew down the hill, impelled by a force stronger than myself. A deep and poignant agitation held me, and my heart beat fast. However, I was in a state that was incapable of any analysis, for it is only possible to analyze deep feeling *after* it has passed. . . . The very process of introspection, being an intellectual process, dispels the emotion itself, which is in the passion of the blood.

But I understood later that the profound upheaval of feeling which personally I had undergone in those tragic moments was precisely the same as that which dominated the soul of thousands of my compatriots too. From the highest and the most consciously introspective, to the lowest, most unconscious, and least introspective, the whole French nation was undergoing the same transformation; and it was pre-

cisely because all were passing through that fervent experience of emotion together, in the selfsame hour, that simultaneously all sense of differences, mental convictions, and individual theories, were immediately annihilated. All the men and women of France together felt that power which gripped hearts more fiercely than any intellectual conviction. And such was its force that instantaneously the old national spirit of France was thereby completely reawakened.

I say "reawakened," advisedly, and not "changed." The qualities and characteristics which came uppermost in that great moment of passion and realization had lain dormant in French hearts for many years. There had been no occasion to manifest them within recent times. But they had ever been there; they were fundamentally the racial proclivities which had distinguished the French people through all the generations of their history. Above all, they typified an *old* race. They were not new, and they changed nothing in the intrinsic national character.

But primitive and uncontrollable emotion, once re-arisen, dominates all those other

emotions based upon pure reason and bred only in the brain.

Yes, higher still than all ideals, than all mentally bred convictions, is the instinctive inborn love leaping in the blood, which is

"L'amour sacré de la Patrie!"

Race and nationality have deeper meanings than even the intelligence of man can compass. The instincts of the blood are stronger than those of brain and understanding, and cannot be controlled by them.

Hitherto I had believed the love of humanity to be even higher than the love of one's native land. But in this moment I knew that the contrary was the truth.

Mixed up and conflicting with more conscious thoughts that strove for supremacy, these simple, passionate emotions held me as I ran down the hill into the village on that memorable day; and, strangely enough, I thought not so much of those near and dear ones of my own family who would be called out to face death on the morrow, as I thought of the wider family, which was *La Patrie!* I felt myself so completely a part of my

own land—more than a part, even—*La Patrie*—Herself! And not only Herself now, in the present, but in all that she had ever been before throughout History, in the past. Herself in my own dead parents . . . in my own dead ancestors, Herself—the nation and the race completely in my own blood!

It is only the more ancient races that can feel thus, those veteran races of the world who have made History. The English and French alone—as the oldest constituted nations of Europe—can feel all that tradition means. And even when we, the defenders of modern thought, laugh at its forces and scorn them intellectually, we know them to be part of the souls of even the most humble of us all, and we are forced to admit that they rise within us and dominate us all completely in such hours as these.

On my way, as I rushed into the village, I met many people, peasants and visitors to P. B., who all, like myself, were strangely and deeply agitated, though they neither spoke nor gesticulated. A few wished me

good-day, with that quiet, solemn, hushed expression that we all assume when we speak in a death-chamber, because we all share the same great emotion in the presence of Death. In truth we were in the presence of death (though we did not know it), for the old soul, the more superficial soul, of France, had just died, and the deeper, older one had re-arisen once more. . . .

The first house I reached was that of Professor G. I had seen him that morning in the house of Mr. L. B., the well-known poet. He had burst in upon a literary conversation with the *Temps* in his hand, and, white as death, had read us the leading article which had appeared the evening before, and which had taken a true view of the situation: admitting that it was very serious. I therefore expected that he would be quite prepared for my news now.

When I asked to see him, he came out with his wife into the garden to meet me. There was a travelling-case in the hall, which seemed to me to be ready for a journey, and the thought flew into my mind that he was only waiting for some definite information to start back for Paris

at once. As he came towards me, I said: "So you know the news?"

To my amazement, he looked surprised, and asked: "What news?"

I repeated the words of the fisherman: "*Eh bien! ça y est!*"

Yet he did not understand me, for he asked: "What do you mean, Mademoiselle?"

I said: "*La mobilisation! . . . La Guerre! . . .*"

He understood then, and every drop of blood seemed to recede from his face. He was a white-haired old man, and had a pointed grey beard; and I remember noting the cadaverous pallor of his cheeks, that contrasted with the white and grey of his locks. He looked at me again in astonishment, as if stunned, and exclaimed: "*Pas possible!*"

It seemed amazing that a man already so prepared and so alertly awake for news should be suddenly so incredulous and so astonished at the information I brought him. Understanding his emotion, however, I put my hand upon his shoulder, and said: "Come out on to the road and look at the sema-

phore." His wife, who had stood by while we were speaking, ran in to fetch a field-glass. As soon as he saw the semaphore pole he knew that mobilization throughout France was now ordered, and his face became, if possible, a shade whiter than before.

"I shall leave to-night for Paris," he said, without the slightest hesitation or reflection. "I am no longer a young man, but I may be of some service to my country even yet. Though I took my medical degrees many years ago, I have never practised. But I may be of some use under the orders of some doctor, in an ambulance or hospital."

I may mention that, though the most modest of men, the Professor's reputation is world-wide. But at this hour spontaneous service was offered by great and small alike.

"I will return to Paris with you, of course," said his wife.

"You might stay on here, my dear," he suggested.

"No, no, I will not leave you!"

Mme. G. went in at once to begin her preparations for immediate departure, and her husband remarked to me:

"There will be a terrible rush at the railway to-night. I must try to get a motor; I hope that I may find one that will take us all the way to Paris, for to-morrow my wife will not be allowed to enter a train."

I left them, and later in the evening I learnt that they had hurriedly packed the dressing-case I had seen, and had left everything else in the cottage they had taken for the season, travelling to Paris by motor.

As I neared the hotel I met other people on my way. All spoke of the mobilization, for all had now read the message of the floating pennons. I was amazed at the quiet reserve and discipline which reigned everywhere. There were no raised voices, no gesticulations, no cries. Strangely enough, during these and during all the following days the "Marseillaise" was heard almost nowhere. Everywhere, when crowds gathered, they were silent, though, in case of necessity, orders had been given that large gatherings of many persons should be dispersed immediately. Walking along the road at the top of the beach, I heard the tocsin being rung at the little grey church nestling

among the downs, and flanked by its high calvary cross. The peasant women who passed me by had very grave and solemn faces. Many had tears in their eyes. But one could see that the emotion was all inward, not outward, which is a form of expression rare with the French, and which always indicates great and deep feeling. That excitement which finds an outlet in vociferation and gesticulation is merely a surface or transient perturbation. The profounder emotions of the race are always mute. This is a phenomenon understood only by those who know the French very well.

Later I saw the women going out to meet their men as they returned from the fields. Many had already been into the chapel to pray before taking the news to their husbands. . . .

But the men knew already, for great news travels apace. Just as the pennons floating in the breeze at the semaphore had told their message to the village, so the sound of the tocsin had reached the men at their work in the distant fields, and had informed them that on the morrow they would be

expected to do their duty as soldiers of France. They knew that on the next day they would be starting and would not return to their fields again—at least this season, so they had brought back all their field implements with them. They were calm and awed, but quite resolute, and not at all excited.

There was much to be done after supper before retiring. Nearly all the men in the village were within the age limit, and would leave the following morning early, so that each combatant should be at his appointed barracks by Monday morning, which counted as the first day of mobilization. Every man who has done his military service in France possesses an individual *livret militaire*, upon which, besides a declaration of his identity, is inscribed the directions which he must follow in case of mobilization orders. These instructions are usually known by heart. Nevertheless, upon this great occasion, each *livret militaire* was produced from the family linen press, where it is usually kept in small households, and was consulted anew. Then there were orders and explanations given by each man

to the wife concerning measures to be taken in case of his non-return. And the wives listened with grave faces and forced back their tears. . . . Though no combatant might carry with him more luggage than an extra pair of boots and a change of linen, the good housewife, anxious that her man should start as comfortably equipped as possible, spent half the night sewing on missing buttons and putting in extra stitches, so that he should look his best.

A few days before an official order had been printed in all the newspapers that every combatant in France was to provide himself with a strong pair of boots, the price of which would be refunded to him upon his arrival at the barracks. This again was one of the proofs of administrative foresight.

To supplement the order for general mobilization given out at the flagstaff of the semaphore, and rung out by the tocsin, printed notices were posted in every commune in France. It appears that these had been prepared long before, in case of need, and had been ready waiting at the Ministry

of War since the year 1904, the actual date of mobilization being written upon the printed form by hand. In those towns not too far from Paris, the bills were posted on the afternoon of Saturday, August 1st, but, as P.B. was so far removed from the main-line, the bundle of posters did not reach the village until the first class of men had actually started. The bills came in about ten o'clock on the morning of August 2nd. Here is one translated into equivalent English terms:

"*Extremely urgent. Most important announcement.*

"ORDER FOR GENERAL MOBILIZATION.

"The General Mobilization of the Armies of Land and Sea is ordered. The first day of Mobilization is August 2nd."

This notice was usually posted up at the railway-station or at the *Mairie* of each locality. It was noticeable that, as soon as the station-master or the employé at the *Mairie* was seen fixing it in its place, a small gathering of people immediately began to collect around him. Then others joined

the group. The poster was first read by each member of the small crowd in complete silence, without a single comment; then read again with closer attention, in order that its meaning might be well grasped. From among the group of people not a sound arose; not a remark nor a single comment was heard. A rapid circular glance of understanding passed from man to man, as if to say: "Well, here it is at last!"

As one group dispersed it was at once replaced by another. Then deliberately each railway official of every grade drew his mobilization badge from his pocket, where he had been keeping it for some days past, in case of need. It was a white armlet printed with red, and it indicated that from that moment the wearer, like the railway to which he belonged, was in the direct service of his country. Each man wore it buckled round his left arm, just above the elbow. Thus were all railway porters mobilized at once like combatants—for their work on the railway was considered henceforth as military service—and, wearing the visible sign of their submission, the men went off

in silence and order to resume their usual duties, without any apparent alteration in their manner, save perhaps for a graver expression on their faces.

Such is the simple method of a call to arms in a modern nation when all subjects know how to read. No heralds, nor drums, nor summons by means of bans or sounds of trumpets, or any of the older forms of general convocation, are necessary. The call is accomplished by means of the telegraph wires, and everybody throughout the country is thus simultaneously informed. Those in the fields are told the news by the tocsin, rung out at once at each parish church; those on sea by the flags of the coast semaphores, or, when out of sight of land, by wireless telegraphy; those in towns and villages by the posters. So all Frenchmen scattered all over the surface of the land can enter instantly into one great silent communion. Thus a modern democratic people gathers together to fight for the Mother-Country without words or declarations.

As soon as war was decreed—even before hostilities had begun—anxiety was instantly

replaced by tense resolve in the hearts of all, for the actual passing from the state of uncertainty to certainty was felt in itself to be a deliverance from bondage.

Nevertheless, it must be remarked that the state of incertitude from which we had just been delivered was not the perplexity of weaker spirits. It had held that quality of suspense most difficult for strong spirits to bear, because it is the dread uncertainty of those who cannot decide which of their conflicting and urgent impulses is the mightiest.

For forty years we had existed in this predicament concerning the expediency of war, uncertain, not as to what might happen but as to what we truly wished would happen.

And now suddenly events had decided for us, and spared us the anguish of making a choice between two evils. Interior debate was thus settled once and for all. Destiny alone would now shape the issues.

Our enemy had accomplished what we ourselves had hesitated to do. Germany, ignoring the treaty of Frankfort, had taken upon herself the responsibility of

decision, while we, in our desire to spare thousands of innocent victims, had checked our hope for *La Revanche* for forty years. In so acting, our enemy had freed us and released our will.

One remarkable trait of our mobilizing for the present war is that during the call to arms neither the word "war" nor the name of the enemy was spoken. Such words, indeed, would have been superfluous, for when we French say the word *l'ennemi* we well know whom we mean! . . .

Neither was there a single dissenting voice. No one thought fit to find fault with the motives of the contention, nor to declare them to be outside of French interests. Nominally, hostilities were begun to settle a quarrel between Servia and Austria. It was not the quarrel of the French people at all. Yet no man thought of asking why, or in whose interests, he was going out to face death. For each felt and knew that, if the excuse was far-fetched, the true reason was easy enough to understand, and the true enemy was surely ours. Each combatant in his heart was saying to himself: "They have been some time trying to

pick a quarrel. Now they have found an excuse at last, and so now they will get it from us straight from the shoulder. We shall see how they like it. . . ."

It was six o'clock in the morning of Sunday, August 2nd. The sun shone fiercely on the windows of my cottage. I had scarcely slept all night long, but had fallen into a light doze towards the morning, when I was suddenly aroused by the rather raucous voices of the dear Breton peasants passing the cottage gate. It seemed that the whole population of the downs were in the lane, men, women, and children; for all the young and eligible men were leaving by the early train which started at seven o'clock, and which had been "militarized" at once. For after the declaration of mobilization all France was declared to be *en état de siège* and the railways entirely under military authority. Wives accompanied their husbands, sisters their brothers, mothers their sons. Nearly every man was followed by some loved one. The men were all gathered together on the small *place* of the village at a quarter past six. The railway-station being some four kilometres inland, the wealthier

peasants drove in carts to the station, but the greater mass proceeded on foot. No man was allowed luggage of any kind. Each man knew his destination, and was ready, eagerly ready, to answer the call of his country. There was no fuss, no excitement, no panic —only a quiet, simple resolve on the part of each man to do his duty.

As I watched the groups gathering towards the centre of the *Place*, pouring in from all directions, with such simple, earnest faces, as if the defending of one's native country was absolutely an everyday matter of course, and the jeopardizing of one's life in the act quite a secondary consideration, concerning which no hesitation was possible, swiftly through my mind ran Nelson's heroic exhortation at Trafalgar—one of the finest recorded in history :

England expects every man to do his duty.

It was evident that on the morning of August 2nd, 1914, France too expected every one of her sons to do his duty. And he was doing it in the simplest, most matter-of-fact way possible. Unconsciously each man forgot that he was obeying a legal charge. He felt no compulsion, for in his

heart he knew that he was following only his own individual impulse to defend his own hearth and home.

The women and children gathered close to the men during the last moments, but none, of course, could be accompanied on his journey towards duty. The railway company refused admittance in the trains to travellers other than those bound for their barracks. Women, of course, were not allowed within the station, and few women at all during the twenty-one days of mobilization would be allowed to travel on the railway lines of France.

The combatants were under orders to report themselves at the headquarters of the barracks where they had undergone their period of military service, but from that *depôt* they expected to be sent at once to the front, the younger soldiers being ordered out first, the older men following after. This incessant travelling between the various garrison towns of France and the front would necessitate a complete reorganization of the train services on all the railways in the country, and this naturally would affect the general circulation, and consequently all

the departments of national life, for weeks to come. There would be few and less regular postal services, and, as the goods services would momentarily be stopped, each locality would be forced to live upon its own resources. These new conditions of existence were realized at once by the practical housewives of France: but such considerations now seemed to weigh but little. A quiet, resolute spirit animated one and all alike, and all were determined to bear everything with the simplest equanimity. For what mattered anything to the wives and mothers compared to the lives of the sons, husbands, and brothers, they were sending out in defence of their native land? . . .

When the men had started and the train had left the small station, the women returned to their homes with white faces and a tense, calm expression of inward pain that was still determined not to express itself. The little children followed them or clung to their skirts with the awed, puzzled expression of the very young who cannot understand the mute sorrows of their elders.

The small village now seemed absolutely deserted, for not only was it emptied of all

its male population, but the evening before there had been a great rush of thousands of visitors from P. B., as well as from all the localities around, who had taken advantage of the last train, not yet militarized, to return to their homes in the larger towns. As soon as the mobilization had been made known the general rush had been instantaneous. Every single available motor had been sought for, and engaged at exorbitant prices; for although notification that they would be requisitioned by military authority had been made public a few days before, so far most of the owners of motors had them still in their possession.

As soon as the mobilization had begun, the entire life of the nation was altered. In the agricultural districts the crops were still standing, though they were nearly ripe, and the dearth of men would make it practically impossible to garner in the harvest if the women did not come out to take their places. This they did with spirit and courage, while yet bearing upon their shoulders the burden of their women's work. They went on with their duties, as the mothers, cooks, sempstresses, and housekeepers, of the

family circle. To these they added the duties of the breadwinner, who goes outside the home to labour. They courageously undertook to do the men's as well as the women's work—that is to say, to undertake the labour of two classes of workers. All over France the women did this. In my corner of Brittany I saw them take their men's places in the field in their plain black gowns, blue aprons and white *coiffes*, and gather in immediately the harvests of wheat, oats, barley, and buckwheat, and, a few days later, the potatoes—a large and important harvest in that part of the country. In the towns and the factories they replaced the men everywhere. In Paris nearly all the larger, as well as the smaller, shops were staffed by women. The large emporiums replaced their men clerks by women clerks; even in the larger banks one saw rows of women *employées* sitting behind the counters. Those tramway lines still running employed women to work them as conductors; the "tubes" and local railways were also run by women. In certain restaurants the waiters were replaced by waitresses. To a great extent women replaced men on the Press. The municipality

of Paris employed women in lieu of men for watering the streets. In fact, there was scarcely any department in private or national service in which women did not take part.

In the country districts the scarcity of men was still more apparent. In the fields there were no men to be seen, except a few hoary-headed grandfathers and very young boys. Passing through the villages in the afternoon, one found them almost entirely deserted, and only a few children could be seen; for the fathers having gone to the war, the mothers had gone to do the fathers' work. Even the crews of the fishing-boats were women, who went out instead of their husbands, so as to secure the hauls for the market, and thus buy food for their families.

It may be noted here *en passant* that among the masses of Frenchwomen who immediately took the place of the absent men, in all branches of activity, no woman even thought of devising a new costume specially adapted to her unaccustomed labours. All went out to work at once in their ordinary feminine attire, for, for them,

the circumstances seemed too serious to allow them to find amusement in such frivolities.

Meanwhile we were feeling almost entirely cut off from civilization; nothing could reach us from the outside world. For the moment, no other food but that which was indigenous to the locality could be sent to us. But never had living been so cheap, for military law decreed—even if the railways could have carried provisions—that the produce of the country should not be exported. The result was that it had to be consumed on the spot, and, as the number of our community was largely reduced by the exodus of visitors and of a large proportion of the native male population, there was more food to be sold than was actually needed. In the first few days of the war, before the hospitals began to fill, or the refugees to arrive, provisions fell considerably in price. Thus, at the neighbouring market each week, fresh butter could be bought at sixpence a pound, new-laid eggs at sixpence a dozen, and plump young chickens at a franc apiece! During the first few days fishing had not been possible, because the boats

were not allowed out, but special orders were given later allowing fishermen within certain limits to ply their trade. Fish then with poultry became almost the staple diet. Those who were fond of shell-fish could indulge their taste, a good-sized lobster being procurable for sixpence, and a small one for threepence. A large *dorade* cost three-halfpence; whiting and fine large mackerel cost a penny and three halfpence each. Meat, on the other hand, was no cheaper. If anything, it was dearer and far more difficult to procure, for the men who slaughtered the animals were gone to the war, and the women refused to perform this particular job!

After the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, and when it had become known that the English would join the war, there was a great outburst of joy throughout the country, and the English became tremendously popular. There was much enthusiastic talk about "*Nos Alliés les Anglais*," and my English friends who still remained in P. B., even though they had been treated with great sympathy hitherto by the population, suddenly found themselves immensely

popular. For, during these wondrous days of the transformation of the national soul, a new kind of sympathy between the nations of the Allies had been formed, too.

However, my friends were beginning to feel very anxious on their own account. How were they going to return to England? There seemed to be no means of attaining St. Malo, which was the route for their return to England, before the end of August at least—perhaps not even then—for the news was circulated that the St. Malo and Southampton services had been stopped. The chief of the group was a professional man, and his presence in London was necessary. Moreover, like all travelling Englishmen, he had brought a cheque-book with him, but very little ready money, and the moratorium had put an end to all possibility of cashing an English cheque in France. He had with him his wife and two small sons, and an English nurse. The rest of the party consisted of a widow with her two daughters. All these people were anxious to get back to their homes, if not at once, at least eventually, and wondered if they would be able to cross the guarded

Channel, even supposing they were lucky enough to reach St. Malo. For many days they waited in patience, having sent a telegram to the Consul at St. Malo and to the boat service offices. So far they had received no reply. Meanwhile, owing to the law concerning foreigners sojourning in France, they had to report themselves at the *Mairie* in the next town, and each person was forced to apply for a passport.

At last, at the end of the first week of August, they received an answer from St. Malo, announcing the departure on the following morning of the last boat that would leave that harbour for England. It reached them one evening about half-past nine. As the date of the boat's departure was the day after the morrow, they dared not hesitate; for they found themselves forced to leave immediately, or to decide to stay in Brittany throughout the war.

Now, even at that early period of the war we had all begun to realize that hostilities would continue at least far into the winter, and probably throughout the whole winter. They had already devised many plans in case they found themselves forced to remain at

P. B. They did not even consider the possibility of returning through Paris, because of the disorganized train services. So, rapidly, they decided to make a try for that last boat. But it was not certain that they could manage to get to St. Malo in time. There were no trains, no conveyances of any kind, and, anyway, P. B. was a full day's motor-trip from St. Malo. Fortunately, the hotel possessed a motor-bus for the use of visitors and their luggage, but the chauffeur was called to the war. Luckily, however, being an older man, he was not to join his regiment till two days later, and had just the time to take them as far as St. Brieuc. They set to work to pack immediately. They had a large quantity of luggage, being eight persons in all. They were to leave on the following morning at half-past six for St. Brieuc, where they hoped to arrive in the afternoon, and there to find another motor which could take them on to St. Malo, so as to arrive there by the evening. It was a very risky undertaking, because they might never be able to arrive either at St. Brieuc or at St. Malo, but they resolved to take the risk. Fortunately

for my friends, they enjoyed the privilege of popular enthusiasm in favour of our English allies, and in spite of the moratorium, when they left, the hotel authorities allowed them to pay in English cheques.

As the small village clock struck half-past six, the motor carrying the English party away from P. B. left the door of the Grand Hotel. A sympathetic crowd of peasants had gathered round to see them off, for, besides the sympathy felt for the Allies all over France at this time, the English party had made itself popular in the country, and was most beloved. Moreover, were not the English now the actual allies of the French? In the simple minds of the peasants, these same English visitors, who had arrived less than a month ago to enjoy the beauties of the country, and to be the legitimate prey for the overcharges of the local tradesmen, had now been transformed into friends and brethren. Among the sympathetic crowd of women, old and young, children, and old men, who gathered around the doors of the motor to see them off, and to wring the hand of one of the young men of the party who—

as it was already known in the village—would go out to fight later side by side with their own lads, there was not a soul there—man, woman, or child—who would have tried to gain a *sou* from them. Many of the peasants in the group had left their work in the fields to come and give them a hearty cheer before they left. One of the village boys—Marie-Louise's son Yves, who had become the sworn champion of one of the English boys, a lad of about his own age—had come earlier in the morning to help him to decorate the motor-car with the flags of England and France bound together. These, securely attached to the roof of the car, now fluttered in friendly companionship side by side in the soft sea breeze.

With a shrieking toot the motor shot out, dispersing the sympathetic crowd of friends, and in a few seconds was seen bounding along the road up the hill that led to the highroad beyond, its British and French flags flying gaily in the wind, its brightly varnished body adorned with metal platings twinkling in the sun. It pursued its course gaily, bounding onwards as if towards hope. . . .

But suddenly I felt very lonely, and, bereft of the cheerful company of my friends, my thoughts dwelt sadly once more with my doubts and fears for those of my own family in the coming strife. . . .

A few days later I was happy to receive news from my English friends, concerning whose fate I had been most anxious. It was one of the women of the party who wrote—a charming and typical English woman, the mother of two fine boys.

"After the most terrible anxiety, fearing that we should arrive too late for the boat, and in the midst of some amusing adventures, we have managed to arrive here in plenty of time for the English steamer,' she wrote from St. Malo. "However, it will not land us at Southampton, as we had hoped, but in Jersey, where we shall have to wait for another boat to consent to take us to England. As ours will probably be the last boat for some time, we consider ourselves lucky to have arrived here in time. But let me tell you how it was that we got to St. Malo at all. It is all owing to a delightful French officer.

Oh, how I love the French people, and French officers most of all! I tell my husband that, if I were not already a wife and mother, I should certainly marry one of them at once, and I am sad to think that I have no daughter, so that I might—some day at least—have a French son-in-law! For it was a French officer who heroically saved the situation for us. As you know, once at St. Brieuc, we immediately had to send back the motor that had brought us from P. B., because the chauffeur was forced to return early so as to join his regiment the following day.

"Well, upon arriving at St. Brieuc we made every possible inquiry at once, to secure another car to take us to St. Malo. There was no time to be lost, for, as you know, we were sorely pressed for time. But no motor could be found in St. Brieuc for love or money. So, very disconsolate, we went into the dining-room of the Grand Hotel to have luncheon, and to talk over ways and means of getting on farther. In the dining-room there was a group of officers standing, talking. In our despair at finding no conveyance for our party, I begged my

husband to go and ask the chief officer's advice as to what we ought to do. You can imagine what a business it was to get him to do it! At first he flatly refused. But the officer was charming, and came towards our party at once. As I speak French better than my husband, I explained our position, Mrs. A.'s two daughters helping me in the difficult parts, which needed a subtler use of the language. But the dear man grasped the situation at once. All he said was:

"'*C'est bien simple!* There is my own car at the door at your disposal. I will drive you myself, and you will be in plenty of time for your boat. Luckily my car is a large Limousine—big enough to hold you all.' He laughed as he glanced round at the group of eight disconsolate creatures which formed our party.

"It was with difficulty that I refrained from throwing my arms around that dear man's neck! . . . But I remembered in time that I was "a respectable British matron," as you would say, and controlled my enthusiasm.

"As soon as we had finished luncheon

we were all bundled in—the eight of us—with all the luggage piled up on the top of the car, and we sprang across the roads at full speed. Through all the towns we passed the mobilization was going on, and I was amazed at the quiet discipline of the people—their silence, their reserve, their evident resolve. The whole French nation seems changed to me. I can't understand it any longer. It is totally different from what I have always thought it to be, and from all that has been told me about it. We have met with the greatest kindness and consideration on every side, and fraternal good-feeling everywhere. With the officer's permission, Ralph fastened our English and French flags on to his car, and all along the road we have been much cheered with merry cries of '*Vivent nos Alliés!*'

"At one farmhouse where we stopped to ask for some cider in the late afternoon, the farmer's wife gave great bowls of cider to all of us, and a beautiful junket of milk and cream to Ralph and the baby. But she refused all payment, saying she was proud to do so small a service for her English friends.

"What a delightful people yours is, my dear! I love them more than ever now, if possible!

"We all send you our best and tenderest love, and anxiously await news from you, and of your brothers at the front.

"Bear up and be cheerful, and be sure to let us know if you decide to return to Paris."

At the end of the letter her husband had added a few words:

"MY DEAR FRIEND—We are safe and sound here at St. Malo, and, though still far from home, I devoutly hope that our tribulations—or, I should say, *my* tribulations—are over. For I feel that I have not a friend in the world, not even my own wife! All the women of my party seem to be off their heads. They have all fallen madly in love with the French officer who drove us here from St. Brieuc, and I can do nothing with any of them!"

In P. B. we passed through a weary time of anxiety and "hopes long deferred" during

the first long days of August. For more than a week we remained practically without any news at all, although on some days voluminous packets of back numbers of newspapers and far-dated letters were handed in, that had been delayed for many days in the post. Nevertheless, in spite of their staleness, they presented much interest; for they brought us the comments on current events from various friends and relations in other parts of France, surprised by the war in the midst of their holiday, as we ourselves had been. Thus we learned that the emotions we had experienced were shared by one and all alike throughout the country. The only direct and really fresh news that reached us, which was also to a certain extent reliable, consisted in the brief censored official *communiqué*, which was brought in by a cyclist each day from the nearest town—a small *sous-préfecture* eleven kilometres distant. This *communiqué* was posted up by means of four drawing-pins upon the opened shutter of the principal shop of P. B. There were only two shops in the entire village, for even the two bakers and the butcher who supplied the locality

with bread and meat resided in the *bourg* or commune of P., close to the railway-station, four kilometres inland. Therefore the shop which had the honour of possessing the official *communiqué* became the great centre of attraction during the rest of the season. Here the few remaining visitors gathered together, and, while they waited for the problematic arrival of the postman with letters and newspapers, or the appearance of the cyclist with the daily *communiqué*, they discussed the events of the day and the progress of hostilities. Here, too, many *canards* were set in flight. As it was at this shop that all the newspapers read in P. B. were sold on the rare days when the postman put in an appearance, it was here that he made his first halt to deposit them. Thus here, too, each day he was waylaid by a group of anxious, expectant people imploring him for the immediate delivery of their letters which he carried in his bag. As this forced him to sort out the whole of the letter-bag upon each application, the process invariably put him into a bad temper, and nothing could soothe him but an adroitly offered small coin. The villas and

peasant homes were scattered along the coast in a long straggling line, and usually it took him more than two hours to accomplish the delivery of all the letters at the various houses. So that those who lived far from the centre of the village found it more expeditious to meet the postman halfway, and so obtain their long-awaited correspondence a few moments sooner. Often these *special* deliveries occupied much of his time, and usually he went off in a great temper, which was accentuated when later he found himself met at other points along the road, towards the end of the coastline, by anxious suppliants of another kind. These were peasant women who, employed at their work in the fields, could not afford the time to go down into the village to post their own missives to distant and beloved combatants, and came to meet the postman halfway, to entrust him with their own stamped letters to put into the post-box on the train upon his return to the *bourg*. So we realized from the first that, all through the war, the postman of P. B. would remain in a chronic state of bad temper, and therefore resigned ourselves to the inevitable.

We were dependent, during those anxious and terrible days, upon two erratically delivered local papers for further information concerning the actions at the front. One was the *Ouest-Éclair*, which is published at Rennes during the night, and contains the telegrams that have appeared in the evening Paris papers, though the greater portion of its columns is devoted to local news. This journal reached P. B. usually at midday, but during war time it came in at any possible hour of the day, sometimes with the post, and sometimes by special messenger.

The other newspaper of the region was *La Dépêche de Brest*, which arrived about four in the afternoon. This is the organ of all naval interests, and is an excellent paper containing all the latest telegrams.

But these papers were scarce in number in P. B., for all the copies were subscribed for in advance, so that to obtain a copy of either newspaper was difficult. Often a single sheet was passed round by its complaisant owner, and was read by no less than a dozen or fifteen people one after another. The Paris newspapers, such as the *Journal*, the

Matin, and the *Petit Parisien*, all of which publish special provincial editions, only reached P. B. after many days' delay in the trains, so that we could only be regaled by stale news.

To make up for these deficiencies, however, we were offered any number of false reports. Tourists were continually arriving from one of the nearest towns on bicycles, bringing with them stories purporting to be reliable information obtained from some reputable official source—a *sous-préfecture* or a *préfecture maritime* usually being quoted as authority. These canards were so grossly absurd that—even taking into consideration the unnatural condition of most people's nerves at this time—one was astonished that they should ever have obtained the slightest credence.

I shall never forget being roused out of my beauty-sleep one night about ten o'clock by a friendly fisherman, who brought me the astounding news from the nearest town, from which he had just returned, that on the third day of hostilities the English had blown up two of the largest German Dreadnoughts, each with 12,000 men on board!

Moreover, that the Russians were halfway between their frontier and Berlin, and—most amazing of all—Germany had implored France to remain neutral!

It might have been feared that the circulation of such stories would do great harm by giving rise to panic. However, nothing of the kind occurred, for even the simplest peasant people seemed to keep their minds fairly level, and were determined not to be alarmed by exaggerated reports. It was useless to try to obtain news by telegrams, for not only was their transmission delayed in transit for several days, but the initial difficulty of sending them off from P. B. was great, because of the necessary preliminary official *visa* that was indispensable. To procure this, one had to go to the *bourg*, four kilometres away, and apply for the Mayor's signature for permission to send the telegram.

Yet, in spite of all these small difficulties and annoyances of all kinds, the spirit of the people was admirable. Everybody was determined to make the best of everything and to wait in patience. The destiny of the war and of the dear combatants at the front alone was of importance.

In view of the noble fortitude of the people under such adverse circumstances, my thoughts went back to the time of the 1910 floods in Paris, when one could not go down the staircase of one's house to go out and buy food, and when one travelled in boats through the darkened streets of the capital, with only an occasional oil-lamp by the roadside, because all the gas and electric light was cut off. There was the same courageous spirit, determined to bear with difficulties, among the Parisians of all classes at that time as was visible here to-day among the simple peasants of Brittany. What particular strength of resistance is it which in sad and tragic times lives so vitally in the heart of the so-called "frivolous" French race? Those Anglo-Saxon friends of France who, upon this and other occasions, have been able to judge the French character, are wont to declare that the qualities which they discover in such hours in the soul of the nation tally in no possible way with the "frivolous."

So far as we *étrangers* were concerned —for the Breton peasant calls all who are not Bretons "foreigners"—it was a strange

experience to find ourselves in such a moment, when, the emotional spirit dominating us all, we were suddenly thrust out of the conditions of our own more thoughtful life into a state of mere primitive existence. Here we were, a small group of educated people, used to all the luxuries and modern conveniences of life, among simple peasants who hardly spoke the same language as ourselves, either from the material or the moral standpoint, stranded in a small far-away village, deprived not only of comforts—these only too gladly renounced—but of all communication with friends and relations of our own, and this at a time of supreme national anxiety, when every family in the country fears for the fate of its own male members. Yet in that hour we felt that the artificial barriers, which so-called civilization has erected between the various classes of human beings, were very slight indeed, and that the great common tie of race between us and the simpler people around us was so strong that the knowledge alone that we were all of the same blood, and that in our hearts lived the same great hope for one and for all, submerged all sense

of differences. We all felt the same fear for our loved ones and for our Mother-Country. It is amazing how *near* to the great family constituted by a nation the individual feels in such moments. Differences of conviction, of education, even of tastes, are entirely forgotten. Personally, in those moments, I knew myself to be nearer to the dear, ignorant peasants around me than to the most highly educated or rarest-minded foreigner that I could have met. The national soul in me—as in all around me—was paramount at this hour. And I knew that what I felt all those of my own land were now feeling.

This immediate and intimate contact with the peasants of France was a refreshing and renewing education for ourselves. We came near to true heroism by being in touch with the simple folk. What lessons of patience, of endurance, of resignation, and of sound common-sense, they taught us! Eventually many of us will discover that because of our intimate mingling with the so-called lower classes of our old and matured nation, we shall have uplifted our souls and broadened our comprehension. Just as

those of our brothers and husbands in the trenches have realized the simple, unaffected, silent heroism of their humbler comrades in arms, we women who, because of the war. have been brought nearer to our poorer sisters. bearing their burden of solitude and poverty so bravely, will have learned a fine lesson of courage, which their patient endurance will have taught us. We arrogantly suppose that we can teach them many things by enlightening their ignorance. Yet what a moral education we can gain from them !

The news brought by the *communiqué* about August 8th was the happy news of the entrance of the French into Alsace. The elation was great. Strangers accosted one another in the streets of the village and in the country lanes with tears of joy in their eyes as they imparted the news. Was this terrible and unexpected war indeed to see the dawn of our long-cherished, though deeply silent, hopes ? We hardly dared to speak of them, and, above all, of the dreams which this news evoked.

At last a large batch of letters reached me, about August 10th. One of these.

dated "August 4th, midday," was from an old retired naval officer who lived in Paris, and who had been there ever since the days when probabilities of a war were first discussed. The letter had been delayed several days in the post, but, in spite of the fact that it gave us no absolute "news," we found it full of the greatest interest.

"Since the order for mobilization has gone round, but scant attention has been paid to Jaurès' murder, and the *Affaire* Caillaux has been completely forgotten," wrote my old friend. "Just as in the provinces—so the newspapers tell us—the national spirit seems to have been entirely transformed within the space of a few days, so has a similar process been observable in Paris. Those who have witnessed the departure of our *mobilisés* cannot form any idea of the firm and cool resolution with which France has accepted war; and this resolution is only equalled by as strong a determination to win the battle and to crush our enemies once and for all. At this early hour of hostilities we are already aware that it is France who alone will have to sustain the shock of the first attack of Germany's

immense army of fresh troops, eager and bloodthirsty. We know that our allies the Russians will be slow to move, and therefore cannot be of great practical help to us for the first months—for this will be a long war, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary. During the next few weeks we alone shall have to support the entire burden of over forty corps of the German army. In my opinion, the brunt of the enemy's effort will be made through Luxembourg or Belgium. That seems evident now. They will not make any serious effort to break through our eastern frontier yet.

"In Paris the men are grave and resolute, and present themselves at the stations all in good time. Wives, mothers, and children, accompany them, to see them off and encourage them. But there have been no too emotional or too regrettable scenes, and the women restrain their tears so as not to affect the men's courage. From the crowd not a single cry has been raised, nor has any manifestation taken place, yet one feels that it is stirred to the depths. Though children offer flowers to the departing soldiers, no one seems to have even

thought of offering drinks, for the masses are conscious that this is not the time for joyous libations. Every man is self-disciplined and holds his nerves in leash. All are self-controlled and calm. Not a single truculent cry of '*A Berlin!*' as in 1870, has been raised. There is no question of invading the enemy's country, either, only of defending one's own; and from the expression of the men's faces and from their rare words one understands that they intend to defend themselves furiously and to the death.

"For my own part, I am broken-hearted to think I can take no part in the fight. I am too old. The authorities will not have me! Seventy-one! my dear friend. And it pains me beyond words to think that I fought with a defeated army in 1870, and that I cannot have my share in the victory now! For everyone knows that this is to be a war to the death for our nation, and that we mean to win. From the very first moment it was evident that mobilization was admirably managed. Nothing can oppose the union of all the strength of our military forces. The old spirit of the

nation has re-arisen. The Socialists even have put aside all their grievances, and have risen to arms like a single man. As soon as it was understood that the pan-Germanists intended to suppress the liberty of France, not only the Socialists, but every political group of the community, of whatever kind it might or might not be, joined the great mass of the nation; and this union was accomplished in the midst of the greatest calm and discipline, yet with profound enthusiasm. It is a strange thing to note that in the French character apparently conflicting and opposing qualities exist. In one sense the French are emotional and undisciplined and talkative, and in another sense they are silent, reserved, and outwardly calm. And it is the quality of the emotion which dominates them that decides their attitude. With them, the deeper their feeling, the more silent is its manifestation. It is only their lighter excitement which finds its outlet in immediate expression and vociferous gesticulations. The noisier characteristics of the nation are but superficial. The inner emotion of the soul is profound and mute. That is why

Paris, at the present moment, is so orderly, so quiet, so disciplined, so touchingly resolved. It is true that, like great children, a few of the mob have risen and broken up all the milk *depôts* of the Maggi Society, because they have been told that these are under German management! But, on the the other hand, the same disturbers of the peace—only a handful in the mass—have inflicted exactly the same punishment upon the shops of those Paris tradesmen who ventured to increase the price of their wares in view of the rise of prices.

"What has altered Paris greatly is the absence of taxi-cabs and motor-buses. All have gone to the war. The "Metro" railway, for lack of hands, has been closed in various parts; but we are told that later they will be reorganized with female *employées*. Probably in souvenir of the siege of 1870, many households have bought large quantities of stores, not only of food, but of fuel, oil, etc. The rise in certain prices merely results from the suddenly increased demand, but that small panic will soon come to an end when mobilization is over, and when all the trains

bring produce into Paris regularly—even perhaps before.

"The Parisians themselves seem to have suddenly altered in their relations with one another. They appear to have become more friendly and more fraternal. As you know, Parisian families 'keep to themselves' very much. For instance, usually the tenants of a house do not mix freely with the other people living in the same building as themselves. Rarely indeed does one even know the names of others living on the same floor. But since the beginning of the war all kinds and conditions of people have become more friendly, more truly human. One can see tenants of the same house speaking together from balcony to balcony when they come out in family groups to breathe the evening air after dinner. Conversations about the war are engaged in between them. It is evident that a great desire for human sympathy and understanding exists in the hearts of one and all alike; for every family in the nation shares the apprehensions of all other French families concerning the ultimate fate of some dear son, brother, or husband, at the front. Indeed, as a matter of course, in

shops, in trains, etc., one hears perfect strangers addressing one another, and asking: 'How many of yours are at the front? Have you had news yet?' And so views and apprehensions upon the subject of the war are exchanged between people who would never have thought of addressing one another before; and thus intercourse has become quite free among individuals of very different social positions.

"From a military point of view, although so many of our neighbours in Europe may have thought, as so many of ourselves also thought, that we should not be ready, I think that now all will admit that our mobilization was admirably organized, and without any fuss or panic. The higher military authorities, of course, have still much work to do, and are busy gathering all the regiments together and strengthening our cover on the boundaries of Alsace-Lorraine. Our soldiers are there waiting now, quite ready, it appears, stationed a few kilometres from the frontier, so that it may be made evident to the eyes of the world that we were not the first to begin the fight.

"So now we can do nothing more but await events. The latest news we have here is that Luxembourg and Belgium have been invaded by the enemy, which would tend to prove that what I have so repeatedly argued is correct, though none of my military friends would believe me—namely, that Germany would not attempt to cross our eastern frontier, upon which are concentrated so many of our strongest forces, but would make an *attaque brusquée* upon the northern frontier, as was predicted two years ago by the great German tactician, Von Bernhardi.

"Meanwhile the German Press appears to be extraordinarily jubilant.

"The *Berliner Tageblatt* (I suppose you know that this journal has been nicknamed *Tas de Blagues!*), mocking the French, says: 'Poor little Frenchies! We are going to break all their bones for them this time, and, instead of merely five milliards, shall obtain at least thirty milliards of francs for a war indemnity besides.' Another paper declares that: 'The French campaign will be but a short military promenade for us.' As for the Kaiser,

it appears that he is so confident of success that he has ordered dinner at one of the most famous and well-known Paris restaurants for the evening of August 15th. It is said that he has always been eager to sample the wines at that particular establishment. But so far he has never been able to do so. . . .

"Certainly the Germans appear to possess a firm conviction in their superiority, and believe that we cannot oppose any real resistance to their forces. That is probably why they waited so long before attacking us. They are convinced that we are a decadent nation, and evidently do not consider us very dangerous. So they let even the Three Years' Service Bill pass without troubling about it. But now they seem to have decided the exact time for making their attack. Their conviction concerning the weakness of the French army has just been confirmed once more by a Frenchman, by means of the revelations made in the Senate by the fine patriot, Senator Humbert, at the famous *séance* of July 13th, and they have deliberately chosen the holiday-time as the most propitious moment to begin

hostilities against us. On the other hand, they know that Russia, because of the inefficiency of her railway system, will be some considerable time preparing her mobilization, and they consider her weakened, too, by the difficulty of settling with the strikes all over the country. They will probably think that England will not join in the war — though there, I think they will find themselves greatly mistaken. But, at any rate, they will certainly rely upon the fact that at present Great Britain is disturbed by internal dissensions, and is practically upon the eve of a civil war in Ireland.

"In spite of the fact that they are no longer sitting, the *Chambre* and *Sénat* have been called together for a special session by the representatives of the public, and the evening papers tell us that never has there been a more spontaneous unanimity between all parties. Never has a nation, attacked without right, reared its head more proudly to face the enemy. It seems to me that there is a presage of victory in this attitude of France! Personally, I do not for a moment doubt that we shall win. The conflict will be

long and hard, but we shall be victorious in the end. This is a war of nations. Above all, it is a war against war. This time we must crush the military element of Germany, and for ever, if we are to hope for peace in Europe. And it is evident to all our citizen-soldiers that we are fighting, not only for France, but for the supremacy of all the ideals of higher civilization in the world.

"Before closing my letter, let me relate a small incident which I witnessed in the street near the *Gare de l'Est* the other day, and which is most indicative of the spirit of the Parisian crowd at this moment. I was sitting at the table of a small *café*, not far from the square Montholon, watching the crowds of *mobilisés*, as, accompanied in many cases by their wives, mothers, and children, they progressed towards the *Gare de l'Est* on foot, each man carrying his belongings, probably consisting of an extra change of linen and a second pair of boots, either in a bundle or in a small valise. These were the rank and file, but the officers for the most part drove up to the station in the low *fiacres* so dear to the

heart of the Parisians. I was looking at two officers sitting side by side in one of these, when suddenly, the carriage having been slowed up by the traffic, there shot out from amongst the crowd a bright young street urchin, who might have been about twelve years of age, and who looked like the son of some well-to-do working man. Jumping lightly on to the foot-board of the *fiacre*, he threw his arms affectionately round the neck of each officer, and fervently kissed each man upon the cheek. Then he jumped back again as the cab went on, and waving his cap frantically, while his bright eyes glistened with enthusiastic tears, he cried out: 'Vive la France!'

"As the boy ran back into the crowd, he brushed past my table, and I said to him:

"'*Tu les connais donc, ces officiers?*'

"'Oh no! I don't know them at all!' answered the boy; 'but they are two brave officers going to fight for my country; so I love them!'"

The very worst of our anxiety at P. B. was during the early days of September,

when we knew that the enemy was making a rush for Paris. We had learnt from the regular laconic *communiqués* that the President of the Republic and the Government had left the capital for Bordeaux, and, in the absence of all details, we became more and more disturbed in spirit. By degrees the local hospitals had begun to receive wounded soldiers from the front, and from these we were able to gather a few details concerning the hostilities in progress. We heard with some satisfaction that the general *moral* of our combatants was good. Several stories concerning the defeat of Charleroi were circulated, but as a rule all the fantastic tales that circulated at this time were discredited. There was a wholesome feeling through the entire country that the duty of all Frenchmen was to trust the military chiefs who had undertaken to defend them, and to avoid all disparagement of their methods.

That same spirit of determination to allow the responsible military men to manage the affairs of the country in their own way and according to their own lights has been maintained throughout the whole

period of the war, and it is, perhaps, the first time for many generations that the turbulent, censorius, and argumentative French people have been known to maintain so dignified and resolute an attitude. The spirit of criticism inherent in the French nature, amounts almost to a fault. Usually, no sooner has the nation elected a citizen by popular ballot, and put him into a position of power, than his methods are immediately discussed, and, if not actually blamed, are disparaged by almost one and all. It has, however, appeared noticeable that in this war, by the conscious will of the people, this French national defect seems to have been voluntarily suppressed. A calm, resolved, and steady determination to keep their confidence in their Generals entire, and to allow them every chance of winning the battle, seems to characterize the whole nation at this juncture. How far this new attitude of mind among the people of my dear country may endure after the termination of hostilities, I am not prepared to foretell! Whether it is to be a permanent or temporary attitude of mind no one can yet say.

It was during this period of great anxiety and trouble that a Paris resident, a friend of one of the regular summer visitors to our seaside village, inquired whether it would be possible for the *commune* of P. B. to harbour some refugee children from Paris. There were to be about nineteen or twenty in number—boys and girls together. An appeal was made to the ladies of the district, and a small committee was formed to procure the necessary funds for housing, clothing, food, etc., for the children.

Upon this occasion I went with one of the ladies, a most devoted and indefatigable worker, into the *bourg*, or town, four kilometres away, to make inquiries as to possible accommodation. The children were to arrive under the escort of two Boy Scouts, and would each carry a small bundle containing a change of linen. All other articles of clothing would have to be charitably supplied by the committee.

Our first care was to seek for the necessary accommodation. It was not so easy to secure as we had at first imagined, and we made several unsuccessful appeals for help to the local residents.

Firstly we called at the *Mairie* in order to learn the names of residents to whom we might appeal for the loan of a few beds. Here we did not find much help, but we gathered that a scarcity rather than a surplus stock of beds existed in the community. The usual inhabitants were not rich, and it appears that people with families who go to the seaside for the summer generally manage to do with less bed space than at home. We therefore were obliged to relinquish all thought of obtaining beds from the visitors that remained. We next tried to convince the landlords of empty furnished summer abodes that it was their bounden duty to let us have the beds now unoccupied in the forsaken villas of the locality for the use of our small refugees. But they alleged the rights of departed tenants, who, though they had fled before the mobilization, having paid but half the season's rent, had yet left their boxes and many other belongings in forfeit. It was therefore impossible to dispose of the beds in the half-paid villas. The landlords were right in their refusal, for in many cases the wives and families of distant combatants returned to the deserted villa

later, to remain there in the absence of the *chef de famille* at the front.

Then we went to the convent and asked the nuns to try to help us. These replied that they could do nothing. The children, who were their usual boarders during the scholastic year, were at present away on their holidays. Besides, they provided their own bedding and bedclothes, the convent supplying only the empty bedstead.

Then a brilliant thought struck us.

The village communal schoolrooms were also now free, since it was holiday time there too. If we could obtain the use of the empty schoolrooms as dormitories, we might perhaps be able to collect the beds from elsewhere. So we turned our steps towards the schoolhouse and asked to see the head-schoolmaster. Here we met with instant sympathy and a spontaneous and generous wish to help our small stranded guests. The excellent man, with the aid of his daughter, a charming girl of sixteen, undertook to do all in his power. He placed the schoolrooms at our disposal, and even unlocked for our benefit several empty unused rooms on the first floor of the build-

ing. Being now assured of a hospitable roof, we studied all the ways and means of obtaining beds, sheets, blankets, etc., and also of making arrangements for service, etc. Ultimately, after many difficulties, and with the aid of much good-will and many voluntary contributions, we were promised twenty beds, with their complete accessories. Mattresses being scarce, several kindly ladies of the village volunteered to make them for us out of oat chaff, which can be converted into excellent and springy bedding for children.

At last all arrangements concerning food, service, accommodation, etc., were made, and we returned to P. B. thoroughly tired out, but entirely satisfied with our afternoon's work.

But, alas! disappointment awaited us upon our return. We were informed that a telegram had just been received in the village, saying that Paris was closed against the Germans, and that the refugee children could not now leave the city. . . .

This was the 3rd or 4th of September.

Our anxiety was now increased tenfold, and for the next three or four days we

remained in complete ignorance of what was happening in the capital. The telegram which had reached us had merely contained the words "*Paris fermé.*"

The constant strain which resulted from our alarm concerning absent friends and relations, many of whom we supposed were shut up in Paris, cut off from all possible communications, was almost unbearable. We all felt that any tragedy would be preferable to this state of uncertainty. Yet, even in those hours, I remember noting once more with astonished admiration the cool, collected attitude of those who remained in total ignorance of all that was going on, removed from the centre of all their own personal interests in far-off P. B. It was plainly evident that all were *determined*, whatever might occur, to bear their troubles with fortitude. Some families of visitors at P. B. had their relations and families upon the eastern frontier—at Charleville and at Nancy—others upon the northern borderland. What might be happening to their dear ones? Were they even still alive?

To this hour I cannot understand why

that misleading telegram had been sent and by whom it was addressed, for afterwards we learned that only a certain number of the gates of the city had been closed, and that residents had left Paris in hundreds and thousands during all those days of terror. In fact, the pressure of traffic was so great that travellers departing from Paris were obliged to secure their seats several days in advance, and were allowed no luggage of any kind. Thousands of free tickets were given by the municipal and Government authorities to enable the poorer residents to leave the capital, and thus many servants stranded in Paris without employment were enabled to return to their country homes.

Being without any communications from the outside, and believing Paris cut off from the rest of the world, we could form no idea of what was going on. Nevertheless, after a few days—and in spite of the news brought by the telegram which had so upset us all—an occasional arrival from Paris proved to us that the city was not yet entirely closed, though we still received neither letters nor papers from the capital. This was, of course, explained to us later by the fact that, in the

general rush from the city, the mails had to be left completely aside.

The train traffic was such that, instead of the usual fourteen hours' journey that separated P. B. from Paris, it took between thirty-six and thirty-eight hours to reach our village. A friend of mine, Mme. du P., was thirty-eight hours standing bolt upright in a third-class carriage, in which eighteen people travelled! She was not even allowed a handbag. On September 12th my maid, whom I had left in Paris in June, joined me. She was specially fortunate in being able to travel with a small trunk, though a few days later "No luggage allowed" was again the order of the day. What was so confusing was that from one day to another—according to the traffic of soldiers and army necessaries—travellers were allowed or not allowed to start with their luggage. Often one left one's home, after having ascertained that one might travel with luggage, only to discover at the railway-station that one's trunks must be left behind, while no assurance could be given by the authorities as to its ultimate delivery. On certain days sixty

kilos of luggage were allowed each passenger, some days only thirty kilos were allowed, while on other days no luggage was admitted at all.

My maid related to me later the rather picturesque details of her journey, which had occupied thirty-six hours. She had travelled in a second-class carriage, filled to overflowing with wounded soldiers, who were being transported to various Breton hospitals. Most of these were so badly wounded as to be unable to sit up on the seats of the carriages, and were stretched upon mattresses along the floor of the corridor. The carriage was so full that the atmosphere was stifling. During the first night of travelling my unfortunate maid, who was sitting upright—tightly wedged in between two wounded soldiers—suddenly fell forward and fainted away, with her head resting upon the shoulder of the nearest warrior! Happily for her, however, the *infirmier* in charge of the men administered restoratives and considerately opened the window. Whereupon she revived.

In another part of the train were some English soldiers, who travelled part of the

way with them. All along the line, at every stopping-place, the inhabitants of the countryside brought baskets of the choicest fruit of their gardens for the delectation of "*nos chers Alliés.*" The partiality of English soldiers for fresh fruit was already well known all over France—as well known as the partiality of German soldiers for champagne!—and wherever they travelled in the autumn time the English "Tommies" found the stations along the Normandy and Brittany lines crowded with kindly peasants carrying trays and baskets filled with offerings of apples, pears, plums, grapes, etc.

The proofs of sympathy and good feeling were quite mutual. When the refugee children eventually arrived, they told us that on their way down from Paris their train had stopped some time at the station of Le Mans, where the headquarters of the English Commissariat Department were situated. To comfort and sustain our poor, weary little travellers—who had been forty hours in the train, and were yet to face almost as many more before they reached their destination—the English soldiers distributed among them cups of hot tea, which delighted the children beyond words.

kilos of luggage were allowed each passenger, some days only thirty kilos were allowed, while on other days no luggage was admitted at all.

My maid related to me later the rather picturesque details of her journey, which had occupied thirty-six hours. She had travelled in a second-class carriage, filled to overflowing with wounded soldiers, who were being transported to various Breton hospitals. Most of these were so badly wounded as to be unable to sit up on the seats of the carriages, and were stretched upon mattresses along the floor of the corridor. The carriage was so full that the atmosphere was stifling. During the first night of travelling my unfortunate maid, who was sitting upright—tightly wedged in between two wounded soldiers—suddenly fell forward and fainted away, with her head resting upon the shoulder of the nearest warrior! Happily for her, however, the *infirmier* in charge of the men administered restoratives and considerately opened the window. Whereupon she revived.

In another part of the train were some English soldiers, who travelled part of the

way with them. All along the line, at every stopping-place, the inhabitants of the countryside brought baskets of the choicest fruit of their gardens for the delectation of "*nos chers Alliés.*" The partiality of English soldiers for fresh fruit was already well known all over France—as well known as the partiality of German soldiers for champagne!—and wherever they travelled in the autumn time the English "Tommies" found the stations along the Normandy and Brittany lines crowded with kindly peasants carrying trays and baskets filled with offerings of apples, pears, plums, grapes, etc.

The proofs of sympathy and good feeling were quite mutual. When the refugee children eventually arrived, they told us that on their way down from Paris their train had stopped some time at the station of Le Mans, where the headquarters of the English Commissariat Department were situated. To comfort and sustain our poor, weary little travellers—who had been forty hours in the train, and were yet to face almost as many more before they reached their destination—the English soldiers distributed among them cups of hot tea, which delighted the children beyond words.

For after many weary days of waiting and much anxiety, which their continual postponements caused us, our refugees had at last reached us under the escort of the Boy Scouts, which had been announced from Paris. (I refuse, in despair, to give here any adequate rendering of the word "Boy Scouts" as pronounced by the Bretons. It took me some considerable time to understand to what genus of individuals the excellent people were referring!)

Everything was in perfect order for our young guests at the schoolhouse. There were the twenty beds, neatly made up and ready for occupation. Twelve of them filled the space around the larger schoolroom, and the others were distributed around the empty rooms upstairs. We had three dormitories, and a smaller room set aside for the female attendant of the younger children. We had thought of everything. The committee, composed of several ladies of the district, had—besides money—collected stores, food, and delicacies, for our visitors. There were several pounds of chocolate, dozens of pots of jam, etc. Upon their arrival from the station the younger

children were to be put to bed at once, and each small guest was to be given a stick of chocolate, with a slice of bread and a cup of fresh milk. But what was our amazement, when we went to the station to meet our guests, to find that the nineteen children whom we had been expecting had multiplied in number for there were forty-one of them! The two Boy Scouts were there, supplemented by a lady *convoyeuse*, and the work of the three attendants was cut out for them, I can assure you, for the little ones were undisciplined, unruly, and excited. And what were we to do with forty-one children, having prepared but for nineteen? However, with good-will and help from all sides, we managed to take them all in, dividing the extraneous numbers between ourselves. For my part I carried off two small girls, who kept me busy for the next few days, until comfortable permanent quarters could be found for them.

The new arrivals had brought us news from Paris, and had somewhat reassured us. We learnt of the emotions of the Parisians, who had believed the Germans to be surrounding the city as in 1870. But there

had been not the slightest sign of fear or panic—only a certain restrained curiosity concerning the *Taubes*, which at that time came each day to visit Paris at about half-past five o'clock every evening. The amazing Parisians seemed to treat the bomb-dropping aeroplanes as a mere joke. Large crowds assembled in the open-air *cafés*, where a comprehensive view of the sky could be obtained. Some establishments went even so far as to improvise a roof-garden, which was patronized each day by the devotees of the Taube exploits. They seemed to consider themselves impervious to the bombs which might fall from above, for large crowds followed the aeroplanes through the streets of the city, gazing upwards as they walked along, and watching with great interest the intricate manœvrings of the strange birds above their heads. One evening a *Taube* remained circumvoluting over the city for a particularly long time. It was past seven o'clock, and still the crowd pursued its movements from street to street, evidently awaiting the fall of the expected bomb. Suddenly a street urchin, tired of waiting

forming a speaking trumpet by curving his two grimy hands round his mouth, voiced the feeling of the patient, fearless crowd by calling up to the man in the *Taube*: "Hurry up and throw down your bomb, you stupid Boche! . . . We want to get home to our dinners!"

Such was the dauntless attitude of the Parisians and the spirit in which they received the enemy's aerial visits.

But meanwhile we, down in Brittany, had passed through an anxious time, for we had believed our friends in Paris to have been in great danger. Yet, though so far we had no indication as to the manner in which they had faced these perils, we knew that they would not be downhearted. Later, when we learned how serenely dignified had been their conduct in face of the enemy's rush towards Paris, our admiration was increased and our fears appeased. During eight or ten days it had been useless to attempt to write to any friends in or near Paris, still less to expect any answer from them; for when we tried to enter into communication with

anyone by post, we seemed to be playing a game of cross-purposes. The mails were so absurdly irregular that one could never rely upon any letter being either sent or received.

But when at last we began to receive the letters and papers which had been so long delayed in the military trains, they proved to us more conclusively than anything else the spiritual serenity of those who had just been through a period of anxious storm and stress. Amazing tranquillity of a people usually so exuberant and excitable! But those who know the French well were not surprised. The people of France possess the deeply hidden virtues of an old race which has suffered much and carries in its heart the memories of many former struggles and final victories, of many overwhelming defeats rapidly followed by a marvellous renewal of the national spirit.

But the time had now come when I felt terribly homesick for Paris. I had come to the end of my patience, and felt that I could no longer remain an exile while my relations, friends, and comrades, were in the thick of the fight. I had

been particularly dismayed at the news of the enemy's descent into Chantilly, where I had near relations.

There had been an immense burst of indignation in the small Breton towns of the coast when we had learned of the bombarding of Rheims Cathedral. At first the information was received almost with incredulity. Most of the people at P. B.—amongst whom so many absurd stories had already been circulated—refused to believe the report, which they declared must be another *canard*. It seemed, indeed, incredible that a nation, so-called civilized, like Germany—who boasts of her *Kultur*—should have perpetrated so dastardly an act. Since the thirteenth century the cathedral had stood as a monument to everything that represented the greatness and glory, not only of France, but of Gothic art. Throughout history many terrible enemies had battled in its vicinity, yet so far none had yet been so vile as to have insulted its majesty. It required a modern German army to dare to outrage its dignity!

But the news, alas! was but too true, as all the world now knows.

Rumours of the repulse of the German army and the subsequent victory of the Marne had reached us, too, and we were also told that the railway-lines were beginning to be less encumbered.

So I now decided to return.

But I had reckoned without my host. It was one thing to decide to travel home, but quite another thing to put that decision into execution. To obtain information at P. B. concerning the hours of the trains to Paris and concerning the possibility of travelling with luggage was most difficult of achievement. As our *bourg* was served by a local railway, of which all the regular *employés* were away at the war, the new *employés*, who were either very old men or young boys, could give no information as to the conditions of travelling on the main-line, the services being entirely disorganized by the mobilization.

At last, after several prepaid telegrams—all long delayed in transit—to various high officials of the company, all of whom gave me different answers, I was able to gather that I might start on a certain day by a comparatively rapid train returning to Paris

by means of a Normandy line, but as for the transport of luggage nothing could be assured me. I might be able to take it through, or I might possibly be forced to leave it *en route!* However, I decided to start, even if I had to stop on the way and proceed to Paris in stages. At that date the trains were not allowed to run at a pace exceeding thirty kilometres an hour. We travelled comparatively rapidly as far as Dreux; thence, however, it took us nearly eight hours to get to Paris—a distance usually accomplished in less than an hour.

We travelled with many soldiers returning to the front from hospitals or convalescent homes. In my compartment, which was quite full, there were two Spahis—our native African regiment—on their way back after a few weeks' convalescence in Normandy. One of the men was very ill, and was bent in two with pain. The poor fellow had caught a violent chill by sleeping face downwards upon the ground at night time—a feat he was quite used to performing in his own native land, under African skies, without pernicious results, but which could

Rumours of the repulse of the German army and the subsequent victory of the Marne had reached us, too, and we were also told that the railway-lines were beginning to be less encumbered.

So I now decided to return.

But I had reckoned without my host. It was one thing to decide to travel home, but quite another thing to put that decision into execution. To obtain information at P. B. concerning the hours of the trains to Paris and concerning the possibility of travelling with luggage was most difficult of achievement. As our *bourg* was served by a local railway, of which all the regular *employés* were away at the war, the new *employés*, who were either very old men or young boys, could give no information as to the conditions of travelling on the main-line, the services being entirely disorganized by the mobilization.

At last, after several prepaid telegrams—all long delayed in transit—to various high officials of the company, all of whom gave me different answers, I was able to gather that I might start on a certain day by a comparatively rapid train returning to Paris

by means of a Normandy line, but as for the transport of luggage nothing could be assured me. I might be able to take it through, or I might possibly be forced to leave it *en route!* However, I decided to start, even if I had to stop on the way and proceed to Paris in stages. At that date the trains were not allowed to run at a pace exceeding thirty kilometres an hour. We travelled comparatively rapidly as far as Dreux; thence, however, it took us nearly eight hours to get to Paris—a distance usually accomplished in less than an hour.

We travelled with many soldiers returning to the front from hospitals or convalescent homes. In my compartment, which was quite full, there were two Spahis—our native African regiment—on their way back after a few weeks' convalescence in Normandy. One of the men was very ill, and was bent in two with pain. The poor fellow had caught a violent chill by sleeping face downwards upon the ground at night time—a feat he was quite used to performing in his own native land, under African skies, without pernicious results, but which could

not be indulged in in the fresh, damp country he had just been visiting. He was doubled up with cramp, and evidently enduring great pain. We managed to give him restoratives, and a free space was made for him upon one side of the carriage. We covered him up warmly with all our rugs, making him quite comfortable. I had an indiarubber travelling cushion with me, and this I placed beneath his head. He took so great a fancy to this that later I made him a present of it to use in the trenches. When ultimately we arrived in Paris, he appeared to have greatly recovered. He showed his cushion triumphantly to all his comrades upon the platform. Several of them—like great children at play—tried to take it away from him and annex it for their personal use ; but my Spahi was too quick for them, and after a little horseplay, being a strong hulking fellow, he administered a few playful kicks and well-aimed blows, delivered with perfect good-nature, but which soon put an end to their pretensions. Then, triumphantly, he marched out of the station, waving the cushion victoriously above his head !

He told me that he would cherish that cushion in the trenches, for it would be a great comfort to him; and often since I have wondered why so few people, who have loaded our soldiers with presents for the front, have not thought of providing them more widely with air-cushions, which are so easily rolled up and carried in the pocket.

The other Spahi, travelling with his friend, who tended the sick man like a mother, carried with him several well-filled heavy bags. I asked him what they contained, and laughingly he showed me. They were packed full of provisions given to the two men by the kind peasants who had lodged them during their convalescence. They contained no less than seven pounds of chocolate, forty hard-boiled eggs, three cold roast chickens, three large brioches, besides other cakes, bread, fruit, and cheese, in profusion. There were also several bottles of wine and a quart of cold black coffee. At one part of the journey, and considering the slow pace at which we travelled, some of the occupants of the carriage had feared that the train would

not bring us into Paris in time even for late supper. The Spahi had laughingly offered to give us a meal, declaring that he had sufficient with him to satisfy us all. Naturally, we had not believed him, and had refused his offer. But we little guessed that his bags were so well stored with provisions, or we might have accepted!

We reached Paris at midnight in total darkness. The city had already been subjected to several *Taube* visits, which had resulted in the order for a total extinction of lights in the capital at night. As our train wound its way in through the darkness past Versailles and by way of the Eiffel Tower, the impression was most sinister. All that could be distinguished were the searchlights on the Tower as we neared the city.

An amusing incident occurred halfway between St. Cyr and Versailles. Our train slowed up considerably, and suddenly we found ourselves side by side with an immensely long train filled with English soldiers and English field artillery. It was pitch-dark. There were very few lights along the line, and none in the train beside us. Suddenly I caught sight of the English

uniforms, and, lowering the window, to the astonishment of the occupants of my carriage, who probably did not know that I spoke English, I called out at the top of my voice, "God save the King! . . . Rule, Britannia!"

An instant response came from the train alongside, and vigorous mutual cheering began at once. Instantly, also, all along our train, windows were thrown open, and as soon as the English were recognized vociferous cheering spread down the line. Of course, the English Tommies were fully alert at once, and crowded to the windows of their train, answering our cheers with their own. The din, re-echoing and reverberating through the chill air, was deafening as cheer after cheer was raised. "Hip, hip, hurrah!" shouted the Tommies. "*Vive nos Alliés!*" answered the occupants of our train. . . . There were about eight hundred soldiers in the English convoy, and they seemed to enjoy the fun immensely. At last, in the midst of the noise, I was able to get myself heard, and cried out:

"Where do you come from?"

"London!" was the reply from five hundred throats.

"Where are you going to?"

"Amiens!" came back the reply.

(I admit that the name was pronounced so extraordinarily by the English Tommies that I was immediately reminded of the Bretons when they tried to pronounce the words "Boy Scout"!) My companions in the carriage asked me to oblige them with a translation.

"You *must* understand English well to have understood what was meant by *that!*" remarked one of the ladies of the party.

The cheering continued until the train bearing the English soldiers had passed out of sight. Yet in the distance, through the still darkness, could be heard the echoing "Hip, hip, hurrah!" of our friends the English Tommies.

The small incident had turned the conversation in the carriage to the subject of the Allies, and I found it most interesting to learn the various opinions of my fellow-travellers upon the English. The enthusiasm of the French for the British soldiers, who were now becoming quite a

feature on the French landscape, was most genuine. What seemed to strike them more forcibly than anything else in the English private was his handsome figure, his fine physique, and the smart trimness of his attire.

The French combatant in this war who is not a professional soldier makes it a point of honour to appear as unprofessional as possible. He neglects his appearance in every way: allows his hair and beard to grow to fantastic lengths—thus well deserving his nickname of *poilu*—proudly sports his mud-stained, ragged clothes, and, provided that some detail of his costume is sufficiently military to prove that he is not a civilian, he is quite contented to look a fearful object. He is happy and proud to show that he has been "through the wars." There is nothing of the regular soldier in his demeanour; he is a simple citizen momentarily transformed into a combatant, who is the more in deadly earnest because he is fighting to defend his own hearth and home.

It is necessary to point out here that the lack of smartness of the French combatant is the result of the non-preparedness of the

military *depôts*. Hostilities began so suddenly that nothing was actually ready, so that all sorts and conditions of uniforms on hand were brought into service.

But the Frenchman admires the spirit of the professional English soldier, with whom warfare is a business, yet who is determined to get his daily shave and his five o'clock tea even in the trenches, and who keeps himself clean and smart even when under fire.

* I was profoundly impressed by the aspect of my beloved Paris when I reached my flat in late September. The "Ville-Lumière" looked like a woman who had gone through the deep sorrow of an unfortunate love affair, but was determined to keep up a brave and courageous attitude, and would not allow herself to be pitied even by her best friends.

Usually at that period of the year Paris is still more or less the haunt of the tripper or traveller, for Parisians themselves rarely return to their beloved city before the last

* The following passage, down to the end of the chapter, appeared in the *Contemporary Review* (July, 1915) under the title of "Paris in War Time," and is reproduced here by the kind permission of the editors.

days of October. But even when the Parisians of the upper classes are absent from the city, September Paris is yet bright and gay and busy with distinguished visitors passing through, filling the smart restaurants and shops and byways. The most charming women of all countries are to be seen buying the newest fashions in all the large dress-making and millinery establishments that have made Paris the centre of the world of elegance. But the Paris of September 1914, was as if it were a dead city—a city whose soul was tense with emotion, and refusing to be interested in any form of frivolity because all its energy was devoted to its firm resolution to attain the final victory over its enemies. The Rue de la Paix, the Place Vendôme, the Avenue de l'Opéra, and all the adjacent streets, usually so bright and busy at this hour, were now deserted and empty. They reminded one now of a perpetual Sunday afternoon! All the larger shops were closed. Scarcely a dozen people could be counted in the Rue de la Paix in the middle of the afternoon. The fashionable teashops, usually buzzing with noise at this season, were not even opened, and their

closed shutters looked funereal. Even though the poorer quarters of the city retained some of their activity, one noticed that there was a dearth of young men, and an increasingly anxious look upon the faces of the women. The larger emporiums, such as the Galeries Lafayette, the Printemps, etc., were curiously deserted by customers, and at least nine-tenths of their *employés* were away at the front. Later, when customers began to crowd again into the shops for their winter clothing, it was found that there was but one attendant for every four buyers.

All the taxis and motor-buses having been sent off to the front, the local transports of Paris were effected by means of the tramways only, and the local railway-lines had to be closed up for lack of *employés* to attend to the passengers. But the administrations of the railways, like those of the tramways, found that in the absence of their male *employés* the wives of the men could replace them as conductors and porters, and so took them on in the place of the absentees—at a lower rate of pay, of course, even though they performed the same duties as their husbands! The

chauffeurs and engine-drivers had to be recruited from the ranks of the older men, and during the period of probation necessary to their responsibility, the trains were run at a slower speed.

From the beginning of the war up to the early days of the New Year, all traffic on the railway-lines was stopped at nine o'clock every evening, both Sundays and weekdays. After the beginning of January, trains were run an hour later, and in February, till 11 p.m. But the tramway-lines closed even earlier, half-past seven or half-past eight being the latest hours for the evening departures, according to the locality, and the same rules still hold good. The restaurants and cafés were closed at nine, at half-past nine, and at ten later in the winter, and everything was done by the municipal authorities to discourage the Parisians from going out in the evening. Long before the days of the Zeppelin scares all lights were extinguished in certain parts of Paris. Occasional lamps were lit, and only on one side of each street. Excepting along the boulevards and in the larger *carrefours*, Paris looked like a dead city.

I tried to pass the Place de la Concorde one evening in October at half-past eight at night, and found that it was a vast abyss of gloom, approached by another dark abyss, which was the Rue Royale in total darkness. Never had I seen Paris like this. And later it was even worse, for when the newer orders were given, in view of the threatened Zeppelin raid, all the inhabitants were informed that they must close the shutters of all windows, or, in the absence of shutters, must veil the panes with thick curtains, so as to obstruct the light. I was told that a lady living in my neighbourhood had been fined a hundred francs for refusing to veil the windows of her drawing-room. Paris was so dark that it was positively dangerous to venture forth in the more thinly populated quarters after six o'clock in the evening. The municipal authorities had warned the population that, in the event of a raid, the inhabitants would be advised by means of the sound of trumpets and clarions. They were enjoined, as soon as these were sounded, to rush to the nearest place of safety—that is to say, to stand preferably in a doorway or to hide in the cellars of

their houses. As for the lighted lamps in the streets and *carrefours* of Paris, they could be extinguished at a moment's notice at headquarters in the diverse *arrondissements* of the city.

When these orders had been executed, the aspect of Paris was still more funereal than before. I remember some years ago, in my early youth, crossing the streets of the city about three in the morning, on the day of President Carnot's funeral. It will be remembered that Carnot was assassinated by an anarchist, and was buried in state. The route along which the procession was to pass later was being prepared for the occasion. All the walls of the public buildings were draped with black crape, and even the street lamps along the avenues where the *cortège* was to pass, though still alight, were each veiled with crape likewise.

At the hour of the funeral the lamps would be extinguished, but each post, being entirely covered with a black pall, would appear to be one of a straight serried row of black sentries on each side of the road. The effect was extraordinarily lugubrious, and the memory of it has remained in my

mind ever since. I was reminded of this scene the first time that I saw Paris at night during the present war.

But what was perhaps more striking than the outward appearance of my *Bonne Ville de Paris* was the inner resurrection of the spirit of its inhabitants. After the transfer of the Government and of the more important State administrations from Paris to Bordeaux, and after the large exodus from the city, I had necessarily expected to find the inhabitants of the city greatly reduced in numbers. But, at least, I thought that I should find them as full of spirit as ever, and as full of eager vitality. Strange to say, however, the exuberant Parisians of yore had suddenly become impressively solemn and sober-minded, disciplined and resolute. One felt that it was not only the steadier provinces which had felt the shock of the abrupt change to more serious thoughts, but that Paris too, Paris the frivolous and charming, had now fortified its spirit, and was grimly determined to wait calmly and serenely for the end, the final success of which it never for one moment doubted. For I do not think that through-

out this long war there has been a single moment when this conviction has not been keenly alive among the population. There were evidences of the urgent appeal which the Parisians had made to their deeper selves to be seen in every detail of the life of the city. Even the most trivial-minded women seemed to have thrust from them all their most cherished caprices, and to have sobered down into earnest, helpful creatures. The true note of everything now was mutual help and devotion on all sides.

And not only was the spirit of mutual help evident everywhere, but also the supreme effort made by one and all not to wound the feelings or convictions of others. Those who formerly were the most separated by their opinions and ideals were now gathered together in the same *élan* of good-will and reciprocal kindliness. All the meaner dissensions seemed to be forgotten —done away with. Parisians, usually considered so shallow and so light-heartedly selfish, were proving their broad-mindedness and their rare qualities of feeling.

And as the French are pre-eminently an artistic race, prompted by a fastidious sense

of taste and of fitness in the details of life, their gravity of thought and dignity of bearing, as well as their tactful respect for the feelings of others, were now evinced in the manner of their dress. Among all classes, since the beginning of the war, this attitude of definite composure among the people was noticeable, but in no way more than in the dress and attitude of the Parisian women. In the tramways, on the underground railways, in the streets, in the shops, it almost appeared, at first sight, that all the women were dressed in a uniform of dark colour. Not that all were in mourning, but one and all, anxious not to offend the taste of those who wore the garb of woe which French custom imposes so strictly upon the sorrowing relations of the dead, had adopted the most sombre colours for outdoor wear.

At the present moment the hats worn by all classes and conditions of women are still close and severe, and almost entirely untrimmed. There is no jewellery seen of any kind, and none of the extravagant aigrettes and plumes which adorned last year's modes. This sudden change to severity is the more

noticeable to those who have followed the details of Paris fashions within recent years. During the last few seasons popular taste had been largely influenced by the violent and clashing tones used in the Russian ballets, which had taken Paris by storm. The most eccentric styles, the most *décolleté* corsages, the flimsiest and most transparent of materials, the split-up skirts, revealing half the leg of the wearer, the cobweb silk stockings, the bare shoulders and bosoms seen through fine net or lace in full daylight, the high waving feathers, the profusion of barbaric jewels and extravagant furs and laces—all these have disappeared as if by enchantment, because the intuition of the Parisienne has prompted her to conform to the general national spirit in these times of individual and national sorrow. For the aim of even the most frivolous of women now is not to hurt the feelings of others, not to excite envy, not to remind other women, who are sorrowing for the loss of their beloved ones, of past days of fêtes and gaiety.

It is a wonderfully interesting subject to study carefully, this sudden and radical transformation of the soul of a race.

of taste and of fitness in the details of life, their gravity of thought and dignity of bearing, as well as their tactful respect for the feelings of others, were now evinced in the manner of their dress. Among all classes, since the beginning of the war, this attitude of definite composure among the people was noticeable, but in no way more than in the dress and attitude of the Parisian women. In the tramways, on the underground railways, in the streets, in the shops, it almost appeared, at first sight, that all the women were dressed in a uniform of dark colour. Not that all were in mourning, but one and all, anxious not to offend the taste of those who wore the garb of woe which French custom imposes so strictly upon the sorrowing relations of the dead, had adopted the most sombre colours for outdoor wear.

At the present moment the hats worn by all classes and conditions of women are still close and severe, and almost entirely untrimmed. There is no jewellery seen of any kind, and none of the extravagant aigrettes and plumes which adorned last year's modes. This sudden change to severity is the more

noticeable to those who have followed the details of Paris fashions within recent years. During the last few seasons popular taste had been largely influenced by the violent and clashing tones used in the Russian ballets, which had taken Paris by storm. The most eccentric styles, the most *décolleté* corsages, the flimsiest and most transparent of materials, the split-up skirts, revealing half the leg of the wearer, the cobweb silk stockings, the bare shoulders and bosoms seen through fine net or lace in full daylight, the high waving feathers, the profusion of barbaric jewels and extravagant furs and laces—all these have disappeared as if by enchantment, because the intuition of the Parisienne has prompted her to conform to the general national spirit in these times of individual and national sorrow. For the aim of even the most frivolous of women now is not to hurt the feelings of others, not to excite envy, not to remind other women, who are sorrowing for the loss of their beloved ones, of past days of fêtes and gaiety.

It is a wonderfully interesting subject to study carefully, this sudden and radical transformation of the soul of a race.

But can it be called a transformation? Was it not rather a resurrection, determined by the passionate resentment of an invaded people, which brought up to the surface again the more heroic national characteristics and qualities that had lain dormant for so long through unheroic times?

What this war will have proved to the French themselves, and to their friends also, as well as to their enemies, is that, throughout the generations, the old qualities of bravery, valour, and chivalry, which had distinguished the race in the past, have remained as vital as ever, in spite of all that had been said by outsiders to the contrary. And this is proved by the fact that such a magnificent resurrection of the high-mettled elements in the nation should have immediately followed such a period of Paris life as that typified by the tango teas and the Caillaux case. How far off such things seem to us now, and how uninteresting! For they belong to the distant, far-away times "before the war."

For France now is stern, grave, and serene, and ready to confront all difficulties, all tragedies even, provided that in the end

she shall be victorious. And the frivolous, gay, and happy soul of her now lies hidden beneath her unconquerable tenacity of purpose.

"A new France!" suggests a friend who has always identified France with the spirit of gaiety. No, my friend. An old France, a very old France! For only a very old and sorely tried nation could find in herself such resourcefulness as she now shows—such depths of feeling and such valour as France is now revealing to the world, and that the corruption which preceded the war was but superficial was abundantly proved by the sudden and violent reaction of the entire nation in the face of war. All the force of the country instantly revived when necessity for immediate action became apparent to all, and, like a torrent of lava sweeping away into oblivion before its fiery flood all that it touches, all frivolity immediately disappeared. The traditional and heroic soul of France had come back to life again. The very originators of the most extravagant and sumptuous luxuries were the first to don their uniforms, to go out to the front, and die like heroes. The

women, too, at once threw aside their finest gowns to follow ambulance classes, and to don the straight linen overall and tight-bound veils of the Red Cross nurses. Even those women who did not serve as nurses sobered down their costumes at once, and, their motors having been commandeered for the army, one sees them now plainly attired in dark serge costumes and close hats, using the *Métro* as a means of locomotion, and, laden with parcels for the soldiers, going from one hospital to another.

The Parisienne of to-day is equipped the whole day long as for early morning shopping or a walk in the Bois before luncheon. Even "at home" days are done away with in Paris at present, for no one is entertaining, and there is no probability of any hostess wishing to entertain for some time to come. There are, of course, no evening entertainments, and after a long day's work devoted to good deeds, all Paris goes to bed now at nine o'clock in the evening.

It is to be hoped that history will not forget to extol the virtues of the woman of 1914; for she is truely worthy of commendation. The modern Parisienne has not

needed the slightest admonition, nor lesson, nor teacher, to point out to her where her duty lies. The wave of heroism that has swept over all the country has dominated and possessed her soul; and, though her sex forbids her the excitement of the fight, she has in her own way gone to the front and become a soldier, for the soldier's spirit has filled her soul. And her greatest merit is that she does not realize the noble courage of her own conduct.

The entire population of Paris has marvellously adapted itself to the new conditions of national life. It may even be said that many of those citizens, both men and women, who formerly were the most agitated members of the community, now find a great charm in the simple life into which they have been forced by circumstances; and if the tormenting thought of the hostilities in progress at the front did not beset them, they would welcome the new conditions of their existence with delight. For if Paris is no longer Paris as they once knew her, she has gained a new charm which but few of us knew before, which is the charm of the provincial town. How often, during

a season of overstrung nervous excitement, when the days seemed too short to contain their various and varied occupations, with all the hurry and bustle that one forced into them, would we not have welcomed days of quiet and uneventful hours which offer us time for meditation, and the simpler and rarer emotions of pleasant friendly intercourse! Not to mention the reading and music and all the other attractive pursuits to which one could devote no time at all during the days of Tango teas and Russian ballets.

Besides these new joys, what novelties have not been discovered since the beginning of the war by the weary and surfeited Parisians who formerly spent all their time in frivolities! Because economy is the order of the day on all sides, the more elementary forms of amusement are now being cultivated, and one is discovering new sources of delight in the simpler pleasures. Just as the women of the jaded Court of Marie Antoinette found great charm in playing at butter-making, the neurasthenic ladies of 1914 have discovered a new enjoyment in cultivating the more unsophisticated pastimes.

There are even no dinner-parties now given in Paris, but occasionally a hostess invites a few of her old friends to a simple dinner—*le dîner de guerre*, she calls it—composed merely of two dishes. As the men-servants are all away at the war, the war-dinner is served by a simple hand-maiden. Economy being severely practised in the household because of the necessary charities to be performed, it is taken quite as a matter of course that one's hostess should deprive herself of all unnecessary luxury, in order to come to the aid of some poor mother of a starving family.

The table therefore is not decorated with expensive flowers nor covered with a lace tablecloth. But the diners—not in evening-dress—gather around and chat together with greater intimacy and *abandon* than before. The suppression of all pomp and show has reduced the guests to their native simplicity, and they are all the better for it. At these informal gatherings, as well as at the knitting-parties, which have replaced the formal "at home" calls in the afternoon, the conversation becomes more cordial, and people who formerly would

have found time only to be mere acquaintances now become friends. The profounder qualities are allowed to become more apparent. One is not ashamed to show the true depths of one's heart, any more than one is ashamed to own one's poverty. It is no longer "the thing" to be smart, but to be simple, real, and kindly.

Neither is there time or taste for talking scandal. No one even thinks of it. It is a curious fact that during war time, when everyone in the nation is in fear for the life of some loved one, no one wishes to speak unkindly of one's friends. Such habits may have been current last year—*avant la guerre.* But now *nous avons changé tout cela!* For the two periods are quite separate in the minds of all. There was the time *avant la guerre,* but now we are living in the time *pendant la guerre.* These terms will probably subsist for many generations on the lips of Parisians. *Avant la guerre* will signify all that is frivolous and meretricious, while *pendant la guerre* will signify all that is heroic.

Of course *la guerre* will now always

mean for us this *particular* war, though until now *la guerre* to French people has meant the war of 1870. We now allude to that past war as *la guerre de* '70.

For the current expressions used by a generation typify that generation throughout history.

The general stampede from the capital, when the President of the Republic, the Government, the high State administrations, and even the offices of some of the most important newspapers, were transferred to Bordeaux, took life still further away from Paris, making Bordeaux the capital of the nation for the time being. This general exodus from Paris gained a new sobriquet for those who fled the city. Henceforth they were known as *tournedos à la Bordelaise*, which literally translated means "turnbacks in the style of Bordeaux." This is actually the name of a dish popularly liked amongst Frenchmen, a very delicate sort of steak served up with a Bordelaise sauce, and was an apt nickname for the occasion. But it was most indicative, too, of the disregard of Parisians

for the Government as an institution carrying weight and respect, to observe that, while the whole of the State paraphernalia was absent from Paris, the Ville Lumière herself fared just as well without it. It is true that at that time the military Governor of Paris, General Gallieni, had taken up the reins of responsibility, and was managing the interior government of the city with an efficiency which restored the Parisians' confidence.

I had left Paris in June, and returned to it at the end of September. During that lapse of time the war had broken out, and the entire spirit of the city had been transformed.

The Parisians, like the provincials, seemed determined to forget all the differences that might once have separated them—differences of opinions and convictions, whether political, social, or religious. There were no dissensions now of any kind. This was noticeable in a great number of ways, but in no detail was it more apparent than concerning the choice of the newspapers sold and read in the capital. Hitherto the class of readers of the various political papers had been most clearly defined. It

would have been impossible to find a Socialist with the *Écho de Paris* in his hand, or a *Réactionnaire* reading *La Guerre Sociale*. But since the war all these habits had been changed. People of all political groups and opinions read the *Écho de Paris* now, not only for the war news, but also to read the articles which Maurice Barrès and Paul Bourget publish in its columns, so as to be able to keep in touch with the point of view of these stern upholders of the Nationalist and religious parties, which had suddenly become of great interest to men of all parties in France. Gustave Hervé, too, who had served so many years in prison for his too advanced Socialist and pacifist views, had now become an ardent and eager patriot, who thirsted for the blood of the enemy. His articles in the *Guerre Sociale*, explaining this transformation, are some of the most ably written and most admired journalistic productions of his time, and meet with general enthusiasm. This writer, who, if he had not absolutely insulted the French flag, had at least once derided it, and had paid for this derision with several months' imprisonment, now produced articles

which, in their simple and practical rhetoric and with their strong common-sense arguments, did much to reassure the people. They remind one somewhat of certain articles by Henri Rochefort. Indeed it may be said that Hervé's success as a *chroniqueur* among the public of 1914 has only been equalled by Rochefort's during the war of 1870. People professing every variety of thought and religion read his daily articles eagerly, and are amazed to find that the once exaggerated, absurd, and anti-Governmental pamphleteer can express such sober-minded and subtle arguments in favour of peace and good-will towards all men as are now signed by this once fiery opponent of law and order.

The call to arms of all men, of all denominations, of all classes, of all trades and convictions, of all ideals, and of all religions, making of them all comrades in arms to defend the common cause, has brought about an amalgamation of conflicting interests in a manner that would have been deemed totally impossible in France some months ago. But now the sense of values appears to have been subtly altered, and

even the very terms used to express them have no longer the same quality of meaning which they possessed before the war.

Thus has *l'Union Sacrée* been accomplished.

PART II

I

WHY FRANCE WAS UNPREPARED FOR WAR

THE Germans had been preparing for the present war for the last forty-four years. We now possess evidence proving that fact. Yet France—her nearest neighbour, her oldest inveterate enemy, whom she had vanquished in 1870, and who had never forgiven nor forgotten that humiliation—was apparently not aware that these preparations against her were in progress; or at least, though she knew of them, she appeared to understand but little of their purpose. Perhaps, even, she deluded herself in the thought that they were not directed against her. What is certain is that she acted as if she did not expect to be invaded;

therefore she made no adequate preparations to cope with such an emergency.

Everything had been done to prevent the masses from considering war possible, still less as imminent. The Press, under Governmental propulsion, excluded all information that might have enlightened public opinion as to the ever-increasing preparations of Germany. France, like England, had not perceived the meaning of the thousands of German spies that infested the land and invaded every department of national activity.

Nevertheless, can it be truly said that France was unprepared? Hardly, when one has seen her immediate response and eager rush to the enemy. It would perhaps be fairer to say that, even though not materially equipped, she was not morally unprepared. For that the heart of the nation was ready has been amply proved by the magnificent and determined fighting spirit which all classes have shown since the first day of hostilities.

Why was it, then, that the leaders of France had not perceived the inevitable fatality of coming events? Why was it

that the French nation had not held itself in readiness for a probable war?

The answers to these questions will be found in diverse causes.

Statisticians tell us that war is one of the fatal laws of the universe, and emphasize their assertion by saying that since the year 1496 B.C. to the year 1861—that is to say, during a period of 3,357 years—there have been but 227 years of peace! And this amongst so-called civilized nations! Thus there have been 3,130 years of warfare and bloodshed, making an average of fourteen years of warfare to each single year of peace. In face of such figures there is no means of disputing the evident fact that until modern times war has been an apparent law of the world.

But within recent times—during the last forty-four years of peace—France had begun to be interested in other things than in warfare, and, being always in the vanguard of intellectual progress, had been greatly attracted by ethical speculations on pacifism and internationalism. All the more modern intellectual ideas amongst all the civilized nations, following France's lead, tended

towards a policy of peace and understanding between nations, and towards the hope that a more developed and conscious humanity would do away with warfare as the sole method of settling human differences. France herself had been one of the first nations of Europe to respond eagerly to the generous appeal of the Tzar for the institution of a Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

The Socialistic persuasions also—which were the inevitable prolongation and natural outcome of more advanced Republican thought—had of recent years won many adherents, who were in principle opposed to all ideas of warfare, declaring not only that it was an immoral and effete force of the world, but also that they felt no unfriendliness against their brother Socialists in Germany.

Such ideals, principles, and convictions, do not lead a nation to practical preparations for hostilities, and French politicians and leaders of thought, devoted to mere intellectual speculations, had not, as a whole, considered practical issues. Indeed, in the words of Prince von Bülow himself, in his famous book "Programmes of Political

Parties," "the characteristic trait of the French nation lies in the fact that the psychic needs of the people are more necessary to them than their material wants."

Nevertheless, and in spite of these pacific theories, a certain number of the French military leaders were constantly engaged upon the study and invention of scientific weapons of modern warfare. This is proved by the production of such a piece of artillery as the famous *soixante-quinze* (75) cannon, and by the invention and advancement of all aerial and marine navigation. Indeed, besides artillery, the motors, wireless telegraphy, dirigibles, and submarines, so largely used in the present war, are all primarily of French invention.

After a long period of comparative peace the French nation had become sincerely interested in other intellectual and scientific discoveries, and had abandoned a steadily pursued national defence. Internationalism had become the principal condition of mind of the modern Frenchman. He had travelled much, and had learned some foreign languages, German amongst others. He had studied the various foreign countries, though

Germany insufficiently, for he had never read either Treitschke or Bernhardi. But he felt convinced that the men of all nations together form one large human family, and that all men are brothers.

But what of Alsace? may be objected. Yes, there was Alsace, he had not forgotten her. "*Y penser toujours. . . . N'en parler jamais*," had been Gambetta's advice. And, generously, he had dreamed of a pacific understanding that would make Alsace-Lorraine an independent State. For his pacifist illusions had blinded him as to the real spirit of Germany.

But there were other reasons, strong, profound, and of a more general order, which can explain why France was not practically prepared for war. The adversaries of the Republic lay the blame entirely upon Republican methods. In a measure they are right, and the saner and more moderate Republicans will admit that to a certain extent the accusations of their opponents are founded upon truth; for the essential function of a Republic is that of administering a community in times of peace, of striving for the prosperity of the nation, and not

for warfare. In spite of some excellent influences upon the character of the nation—for, to be just, one must admit that democratic teachings of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have been beneficial to the spirit of the race — the Republic has grave errors to answer for in having prevented the nation from realizing its immediate danger, by neglecting all preparation for war, and by allowing all the bellicose energy of the country to be concentrated in other directions.

After the events of 1870, France was the first great people of modern Europe to evolve a Democratic form of government, and it was natural that the defenders of the Republic should desire the maintenance of the policy for which they themselves had battled above all other things. Therefore they did not desire, nor even contemplate, warfare with any outside Power. The young activities of the Republic were entirely employed in asserting the supremacy of Republican ideals, and its more fruitful energies being used to establish its own domination or to convince fresh adherents, the combative spirit of the

nation during the last forty years was mainly directed towards its own internecine struggles, against Reactionaries and Clericals more especially. Though Republican theories had succeeded in gaining the greater portion of the nation—those whom they had not convinced had rallied round them merely because there was no other possible form of government in France to oppose — nevertheless the Republic still possessed irreconcilable enemies within its own national frontiers, and all its fighting energies were inevitably employed in indoctrinating, or in silencing these opponents, rather than in preparing for war with an outside neighbour.

Even those long colonial campaigns which the men of the Republic have undertaken since 1870 have all had one object—the aggrandizement of a Republican France, and therefore of the Republic itself.

If we consider the more recent work of the Republic within the last fifteen or twenty years, we shall find that nearly all its efforts have been used in the establishment of reforms—Republican reforms, destined to strengthen its hold upon the nation.

Perhaps the most important of these was the separation of the Church and State, for this ended the long and exhausting struggle between the two apparently almost irreconcilable forces which had torn France in twain. "*Le Clericalisme, voilà l'ennemi!*" served as a byword, proving in what direction the Republic had sought and found its true rival.

Besides this long struggle with Clericalism, which finally resulted in the triumph of the Republic, the various successive Cabinets have been exclusively occupied with reforms of other kinds. Firstly public instruction was entirely overhauled and a system re-established. For it was essentially necessary, according to Republican ethics, that the youth of the nation should be educated upon Republican principles and nourished with democratic ideals. In this struggle for supremacy over the minds and souls of the rising generations, the Republic again met with a strong and vital resistance from their old enemies, the Clericals.

The attention of Republican Ministers was also specially directed towards the

elaboration of democratic reforms, that tended towards the comfort as well as towards the democratization of the citizens. Such were the increase of the salaries of deputies, raised at one sitting from 9,000 to 15,000 francs a year, old age pensions, etc.

The Republican policy therefore offered no encouragement to military ideals—one may almost say that it opposed all military tendencies. And this not only from a sincere desire for peace, but also in a spirit of self-defence against the army itself, which had ever remained faithful to its religious convictions, and was therefore under the influence of the Church, and consequently of Clericalism. Indeed, the struggle for supremacy between the Republic and military leaders almost caused a revolution within the army itself.

In addition to the fact that Republican politicians were almost entirely absorbed in reforms which were ultimately destined to assure the definite stability of the Republic itself, the reformers also neglected to attribute portions of their yearly Budget to the necessary war credits. For the last twenty years, the succeeding Ministers of War have never demanded the military Budgets which

would have been indispensable for the maintainance of a strongly prepared army ready for the field.

That to Republican politicians, the defence of Republican principles has always appeared more essential than the maintenance of France's military prestige among other nations, has been evident in many ways. An example of this has often been proved to those women specially interested in forwarding the feminist movement, who have continually met with the following argument from convinced Republicans:

"If women were given the vote, they would be led to the polling-stations by the Roman Catholic priests, and that would be the downfall of the Republic. We are therefore against female suffrage."

The very form of their objection proves that the preservation of their own form of government appeared more essentially necessary to them than any wider national reform.

Another of the forces that militated against any possibility of war preparation—which necessarily implies long foresight and steady, ever-vigilant activity—was the instability of the various and suc-

ceeding Republican Cabinets, and the consequent incapacity of State administrations to pursue any long-sustained effort. For the actual work and organization of such preparation, which demand incessant tenacity of purpose, are directly under the control of the high officials of the State administrations. But it is impossible to maintain the necessary cohesion and regular persuance of any definite military scheme if the War Minister, who is nominally responsible for the administration of his own department, is being continually changed. Governmental instability paralyzes the efforts of the administrative directors, who realize that no sooner might a reform in their own department be decided upon, than the Minister himself might fall from power, thus abruptly putting an end to all carefully premeditated plans. And in most cases the fall would be due, not necessarily to his own policy, but to the policy of one of his colleagues, involving the fall of the entire Cabinet. Thus, the most unimportant of political dissensions may often overthrow the slow, patient, far-seeing labour of the preceding weeks or months. The perfectly justifiable

would have been indispensable for the maintainance of a strongly prepared army ready for the field.

That to Republican politicians, the defence of Republican principles has always appeared more essential than the maintenance of France's military prestige among other nations, has been evident in many ways. An example of this has often been proved to those women specially interested in forwarding the feminist movement, who have continually met with the following argument from convinced Republicans:

"If women were given the vote, they would be led to the polling-stations by the Roman Catholic priests, and that would be the downfall of the Republic. We are therefore against female suffrage."

The very form of their objection proves that the preservation of their own form of government appeared more essentially necessary to them than any wider national reform.

Another of the forces that militated against any possibility of war preparation—which necessarily implies long foresight and steady, ever-vigilant activity—was the instability of the various and suc-

ceeding Republican Cabinets, and the consequent incapacity of State administrations to pursue any long-sustained effort. For the actual work and organization of such preparation, which demand incessant tenacity of purpose, are directly under the control of the high officials of the State administrations. But it is impossible to maintain the necessary cohesion and regular persuance of any definite military scheme if the War Minister, who is nominally responsible for the administration of his own department, is being continually changed. Governmental instability paralyzes the efforts of the administrative directors, who realize that no sooner might a reform in their own department be decided upon, than the Minister himself might fall from power, thus abruptly putting an end to all carefully premeditated plans. And in most cases the fall would be due, not necessarily to his own policy, but to the policy of one of his colleagues, involving the fall of the entire Cabinet. Thus, the most unimportant of political dissensions may often overthrow the slow, patient, far-seeing labour of the preceding weeks or months. The perfectly justifiable

discouragement of the permanent State officials brought about by such kaleidoscopic political changes in the government has therefore militated against their setting themselves resolutely to undertake the reforms in their department, ordered by the last-appointed Minister, because they always felt that the position of their chief himself was so insecure that even his most excellently conceived plans could never be put into practical execution, owing to the likelihood of the Cabinet being overthrown before their institution had been begun. Thus the govermental instability of the Republic was a powerful factor against the regular methodical pursuance of any warlike policy.

But, to be quite frank—for the truth must be confessed—a strong reason, perhaps the strongest of all, why the Republic neither equipped the country for a military defence, nor encouraged the bellicose sentiments of the people, was that the Republic itself instinctively feared the coming of war. All Republican politicians had perceived to what extent a possible war would be dangerous to the Republic as a

form of government. They argued—perhaps not always consciously, though all felt it obscurely—that, if France were to be vanquished as in 1870, the nation would consider the Republic as the responsible cause of defeat, and would speedily rise to overthrow it. And if, on the other hand, France were to be victorious, the danger might be still greater. For the enthusiasm of the masses would be such that, in a sudden revulsion of feeling, a victorious General might easily be transformed into a Military Dictator. So that, in either case, the possibility of the fall of the Republic was to be apprehended. The danger of Military Dictatorship was, perhaps, feared most, and this explains why the Press, following instructions from higher quarters, has, since the beginning of hostilities, carefully abstained from encouraging the popularity of any particular General. The higher officers of the French army had, until recent times, always been Reactionaries; for the army and the navy, as well as the diplomatic service, had remained faithful to the Catholic Church and to Clericalism. It had therefore been greatly feared in Ministerial

circles that, in case of war, the army, led by its enthusiasm for any special reactionary General, might be used as a means to end the Republican *régime*. When the time came to appoint a *Généralissime*, General Joffre was most carefully chosen for the responsible post by the Republican Government, because he was known to be a firm Republican, a freethinker, and a man devoid of any personal or political ambition.

That the Republic should have been pacific in feeling and undesirous of war will be easily understood. A Republic can be nothing if not pacific. It cannot be bellicose if it wishes to exist at all. The only warfare which a Republic can recognize is that not waged with weapons, but by expansion of trade and industry. The Republic of France had recognized this form of peaceful struggle, and admitted that Germany had every right to expand her being, and even to prove her superiority in the industrial and commercial world, if she were able to do so.

But what Republican politicians had not perceived was that, if nations, like individuals, exist through "the incessant perseve-

rance of their being," the last unanswerable argument, when differences occur, is inevitably that which is clinched by the force of the sword.

In the words of Marcel Sembat, the Socialist—now actually a member of the present Ministry—"to aim at a warlike Republic is to try to transform a ploughshare into a cannon." In his book *Faites un Roi, sinon faites la Paix*, which, curiously enough, was published in 1913 as a method of opposition to the Three Years' Service Bill, he declares that, "Republicans must know what they want, and to realize that themselves they must understand the position of the Republic, and then act fairly, in accordance with Republican principles." The whole volume is written to prove that a Republic is not apt, and cannot be apt, to prepare for warfare, because of necessity there is no responsible head, no responsible personal initiative, capable of decreeing war or of carrying out any plan of mobilization.

He repeatedly asserts throughout the volume that a Republic is not created to pursue warfare, but peace. It is essentially

against all military action. A sincere Republican can never have a bellicose spirit, he declares. "The earlier Republics of France were not real ones. The Revolution was not a Republic in essence, nor was the Republic of 1848, because it failed to establish itself permanently. The mere fact of the alliances of the Republic are a contradiction in terms."

And he continues: "During the Boulangist period people had clearly discerned the truth which certain Republicans had not understood, to the effect that bellicose efforts towards a *Revanche* necessitates a Dictator. War cannot be a merely heroic episode, after which the affairs of a State resume their regular course once more. Modern warfare demands long preparation, diplomatic and military, and must be such that the period of pseudo-peace which precedes it is itself a *veillée d'armes.*

"It is evident that such conditions are incompatible with the ideals of a sober, serious, and peaceful Republic, in which men go about their work and business without being disturbed. A contentious attitude necessitates an appropriate policy,

and the essential condition of that special policy is kingship."

The author therefore asserts that the nation must make a deliberate choice between a peaceful Republic or a warlike King.

He goes even farther and admits that a Republican form of government has not the necessary authority to prepare for war. "There are too many inefficient nonentities, too many heads of departments that accomplish nothing," he declares, "and the War administration is so badly managed that, in the event of a sudden outbreak of hostilities, when equipping the infantry, it would be suddenly discovered that there were no boots for the men. Boots of small sizes and of extra large sizes might perhaps be found, but boots for moderate-sized feet would be entirely lacking in the equipment stores of the War Office."

This proves that the Socialists themselves did not believe in the possibility of any organizing powers in a Republic. However, M. Sembat's fears were somewhat exaggerated, and it is interesting to compare his declaration with what actually took place

at the end of July, 1914, when the mobilization of troops was imminent.

It will be remembered that, three or four days before mobilization was decreed, some thoughtful person, probably some director in the War Department, caused a notice to be inserted in all the newspapers of the country to the effect that, in case of a possible mobilization, every future combatant was to provide himself with a strong pair of walking boots, the price of which would be refunded upon his arrival at the barracks. One would like to know whether this particular instance of administrative foresight was due to the suggestion of any responsible politician in power!

However, in spite of the fact of the non-bellicose spirit of the Republic, there had been signs in recent years, not only that the nation itself had never forgotten a possible *Guerre de Revanche*, but even that the Republican Government itself was awakening to the existence of facts that foreshadowed war. More than twenty-five years ago the Alliance with Russia had already sounded a significant note which Germany had not misunderstood. In later

years the *Entente* with England was even less equivocal, and there were proofs in many directions that the German Government had considered this understanding as the testimony of an aggressively reawakened spirit in France. It is evident that, like the Alliance, the *Entente* was considered by the enemy as a fighting agreement between England and France, which therefore stood as a menace to Germany.

A still more recent proof that the Republican Government was beginning to awaken to facts and to a more active interest in outside affairs existed in the passing of the Three Years' Service Bill in July, 1913. After the war scare of 1905 a certain number of Deputies in the Chamber had begun to be dimly aware of the increasing war budgets and of the constant military preparations in Germany, and therefore to perceive the dangers likely to threaten on the other side of the Vosges. This apprehension practically resulted in the voting of the Three Years Bill, which, fortunately for France, had come into active force a year before the outbreak of the war. Indeed, when one reflects upon its opportuneness, one realizes

yet once more how inefficient were the Teutonic powers of discrimination; for it is evident that it would have been to Germany's interest to make her attack upon her neighbour some two or three years ago, before the passing of this Bill, which certainly has been the means of preserving France from a great danger.

The outburst of national feeling which the voting of the Bill called forth proved to Republican politicians that the country itself was eager enough to prove its military valour, and ought to have served as a clear proof that the entire nation was ready to sacrifice itself upon the altar of patriotism. Though it was strongly opposed by the Socialists, it was the more moderate Republicans who, assisted in this case by Reactionary forces, gained the day, and responded by this means to the alarming armaments of Germany. The argument of the Socialists was that for France to increase her armaments each time the enemy increased theirs was a policy that might be continued *ad infinitum*, without any other result than that of impoverishing the country.

Besides these indications that the Republic was beginning to contemplate preparation for war, there were many other signs that the country itself was aroused. Although for many years the nation appeared to have neglected thoughts of Alsace-Lorraine, the memory of 1870 still lived fresh in the heart of the people, and the ravished provinces had never been forgotten. And herein it appeared that the instincts of the nation were not always in apparent accordance with its intellectual tendencies, for, even though pursuing pacific and international ideals, the whole country at heart still thirsted subconsciously for *La Revanche*.

That a warlike spirit was reawakening among those of the younger generation had been strongly manifested of recent years. Under the name of *l'Action Française* there had been a great movement among young men of nationalist tendencies, and the association known as *les Camelots du Roy*, composed of young and enthusiastic students, formed a small and active army of *Réactionnaires*, marching in true warlike spirit under the Legitimist banner which was often displayed in the streets of Paris. The younger

generation was eager and hopeful for the military future of France. It had known none of the horrors of defeat and invasion, and its soul was not weighed down with the pessimism of its forefathers who were the vanquished of 1870. Energetic as well as optimistic, this young generation used its energies for practical issues. It was fond of games, sports, and adventure, rather than of purely intellectual speculation, and, though not greatly encouraged by the Republican form of its government, the quality of its courage was shown by the spirit of enthusiasm with which it went out to battle against the hereditary enemies of its nation.

II

THE QUALITY OF THE FRENCH FIGHTING SPIRIT

DURING this great war, which in so short a time has upset Europe, bringing all the larger civilized Powers into conflict with one another, with their corollaries of minor Powers—two of which, in the first instance, the Allies started out to defend—it is important to remark that the country whose national soul has been the most profoundly affected is France. And this for several reasons.

Firstly, because among the greater Powers now in the fighting line France is—with the exception of England—the oldest country, because she has possessed a complete and distinctive national temperament of her own for the longest period of time. Old nations, like old people, have evolved strong personal characteristics and tendencies which are in-

evitably thwarted and perturbed during a period of warfare such as we are now undergoing. Secondly, it must not be forgotten that France is now under invasion. She has the enemy upon her own soil, for seven of her richest, most prosperous industrial departments are occupied by the hated oppressor. And thirdly, since the last European war in which she had been engaged France has entirely altered the form of her military service, and has assimilated an entirely new conception of her military power.

In the present war France is fighting not merely with her professional army, but with the whole of the nation itself. Every single department of social and professional life, every class and condition of French people —men, women, and children—are affected by the hostilities now in progress as no other Great Power—not even Russia because of her size—can possibly be affected.

The French soldier of to-day does not fight for a King or an Emperor—he fights for his nation, of which he himself, like every other Frenchman, is a representative. And that is why the French soldier is so

especially influenced by this war. He is not a professional military man whom others of the nation have delegated to go out and fight for them. He has not shifted his responsibility on to the shoulders of an army of professional combatants. But, as one might say, he is personally interested, for he contends individually and for personal issues. The whole French nation fights with its hearts and homes—not only the men, but the women and children, too—so that the army is not merely a part of the nation or a support of the nation, or even a special product of the nation—it *is* the NATION itself, in its most complete form. This does not necessarily mean that the French soldier is superior to any other in the field, even though he be gifted with a prodigious faculty of assimilation—because perhaps technically, as a mere fighting unit, in spite of the training of his three years' national service, he may yet lack knowledge. But what each man feels is that he is fighting for his own home and to save his own wife and children from the horrors inflicted by an enemy coming from a few miles away and draw-

ing nearer each hour. Moreover, he is defending that higher, imponderable ideal, above even the cult of the family — his native land. With such incentives he battles with a more fervent spirit and a more ardent soul, because to him it is a question of actual life and death--not of himself, for he is willing enough to sacrifice his life—but for all those whom he loves in the present and whom he hopes for in the future. Thus he develops in himself an heroic altruism, because he endeavours to win for others that which he, individually, will not live to enjoy. This adds to his value as a fighter.

He may, perhaps, not possess the necessary cool-headedness which is part of the technical equipment of the practised professional soldier, although it has been noticed that his particular and characteristic quality, most apparent to-day, is the dominating power of the spirit over muscle, will-power, and even technique. Yet the French soldier is not fighting with his knowledge, or even with his brains. He is fighting with his heart. Therein lies his strength, and therein will be found the reason for his ultimate success.

Another of the great forces which inspires the spirit of the French combatant is his firm conviction that he is about to attain that for which he has so ardently wished—*La Revanche.* For the French people have never forgotten the humiliations of 1870. These have remained indelible and bitter in their hearts. Those of the present generation who are fighting to-day, but were not present at the war of 1870, have been nurtured and educated since their childhood upon stories concerning it. They bear the conscious knowledge of its deep sorrows in their very veins. And beneath all the variously conflicting thoughts that have alternately swayed and dominated their ideals, even when they declared themselves to be, above all things, internationalists and humanitarians — whatever their religious convictions might be, and even when they have thrust from themselves all religious convictions—Frenchmen still have conscious in their souls that strong dominating ideal which to them was in itself a religion—the firm hope of a successful *Revanche.* And this aspiration has remained alive in the hearts of the

masses for the last two generations, even when the political leaders of the country sought to attract them towards other ideals.

Another element which inspires the French soldier's spirit is the firm conviction that in this particular war he has been unjustifiably and perfidiously attacked, and nothing so much excites the anger of a Frenchman as injustice. His combative spirit has therefore gained all the determined vindictiveness of a lover of fair play who perceives that the very principle of equity has been violated in his own person. Moreover, since the beginning of the war, the French combatant has understood that Germany had considered the nation merely as an inefficient antagonistic force—to be put an end to once and for all, so as the better to be free to tackle England, the still more abhorred enemy. And this knowledge has stirred the Frenchman's blood so ardently that it has largely been responsible for the conscious and voluntary resurrection of the France of olden days.

Moreover, above all these considerations, the Frenchman feels that he is fighting

also for something which he places far above any feeling of personal resentment. He is conscious that, while defending his own country and his own liberties, he is also defending all those higher ideals of a chivalrous civilization for which France stands representative throughout history. Upon every occasion, when Germany has broken her word and has behaved without principle or frankness, using contemptible and underhand methods for establishing her power, she has lost more of the respect of the nations that now combat her. And just as Germany has fallen, France has risen in the esteem of all the more honest European nations

For throughout this war, on every possible occasion, and in striking contrast with her enemy, France has, in all her relations with the aggressive Power, maintained the attitude of a civilized and proud nation who would not stoop to commit any of the great or small violations of the laws of international warfare. She is ever conscious that she is fighting for wider altruistic principles as well as for the soil of her own country, and that conviction of lofty disinterestedness

lends a fine eagerness and passion to her methods of warfare.

All students of history know that the personal element in the spirit of the combatants has always counted as a great factor in the winning of battles. It has a power within it that is superior in effect to the best training of armies, to the most perfected artillery and the finest discipline. Even in the days when the troops went out to fight without taking the least interest in the cause they were defending, often without even knowing what was the cause, allowing the Sovereign of the land to employ them as mere fighting units, the great thinkers of the day tried to impress upon the combatants the advantages that an army obtains when it is convinced that it is fighting in a good cause.

The great preacher Bossuet said:

"The conviction of defending a good cause adds courage and confidence to the efforts of the troops.

"Indignation against injustice increases the fighting value of the soldiers, and urges the combatants to fight more boldly and more earnestly. In such circumstances one

is right to presume that one has God upon one's side, since one possesses Justice, of whom He is the protector."

On the other hand, the great Napoleon himself declares that—

"A good general, able officers, a well-organized military instruction, with severe discipline, makes good troops, independently of the cause for which they fight. Nevertheless, fanaticism, the love of fatherland and of national glory, can also inspire young troops, with great advantage."

If the great Napoleon considered the moral spirit of the troops as comparatively unimportant, it is because the form of military service in France was entirely different in his time. In modern days, when each individual citizen of the nation is suddenly torn from his place in his domestic and social life, separated from his affections and business, to take part in the fight, in order that he may be ready to combat with eagerness and to face death as well as many other dangers, it is necessary that he should be inspired with the fire of generosity. Moreover, he must be profoundly convinced of the necessity of the struggle in which his

country is engaged, and must believe in the justice of the cause for which he struggles, and for which he often sacrifices his life.

Even the great politician Bismarck himself believed that the moral conviction of combatants in the justice of their cause is ever a factor that stimulates the fighting spirit. Indeed, it is interesting to note what he has to say upon the subject. In February, 1898, speaking before the Reichstag on the subject of the war credits, he was facing the possibility of a war against Germany, with France and Russia as the aggressors. Upon that occasion he explained how necessary it was for the fighting spirit of troops to possess that quality of eagerness which can only characterize those who are fighting to repress an aggressor.

While urging the German people not to be the first to attack, he declared: "If we were the aggressors, the influence of those imponderable elements—far more important and more effective than those of material force—would be on the side of our adversary. But we ourselves should lack that *élan*.

"We must not let that element of

superiority escape us. If war is to be, it must not be on our responsibility. If anyone is to light the fuse, it must not be done by us."

It is evident that the successors of Bismarck have not learned the lesson which he sought to give in these unequivocal terms. They have certainly neglected the importance of those "imponderable elements," and have given their adversaries the advantages which he foretold and feared. By beginning hostilities, our enemies have themselves placed us in the position which the Man of Iron judged so favourable to a nation which is the first attacked.

The *élan* of the French army is such that, what it lacked at the beginning of this particular war in efficiency and in the matter of material organization, has been amply compensated for by the eager spirit of the combatants. One of the strongest French national characteristics is its assimilative, inventive spirit, and this has been invaluable.

For it may be said that one of the essential qualities of the French is their faculty of improving upon any technical handicraft they may learn from others. Thus all the

fighting mechanism of the French soldiers in the trenches to-day is in every degree equal to that of their opponents. This assimilative quality of the French is observable in every class of work that they undertake. No better plum-cake or plum-pudding, made according to English receipts, can be achieved than by a French cook; and though the blouse, a garment worn by civilized woman in every land, was first designed by an English dressmaker, no one will deny that it has been so perfected in France that no English woman will buy an English-made blouse when she can get a French one!

Added to his assimilative qualities, the French soldier possesses a virtue of personal initiative, which all the combatants of this war—whether they be among the Allies or among the enemies — recognize as a strong French characteristic. Not only does the French combatant possess his personal opinions as to what he is fighting for, but his critical sense leads him to observe his own officer from the standpoint of efficiency; and though he is determined to obey, he cannot forget that he possesses an individual and original judgment.

The head officers all declare that the qualities of resourcefulness, initiative, and the power of assimilation, are remarkable among their men. Even those combatants who are recruited from those callings which in no way conform with military training give evidence of their amazing adaptability to circumstances, and of their resourcefulness in creating the necessaries of life required in their present environment. Amongst my own acquaintances an example of this is most striking. A popular and talented poet, well known in Parisian salons —a most fastidious and critical being in ordinary life, whose chief delight appeared to consist in hyperelegant, literary ratiocination—was called to the front on the first day of hostilities. In a recent letter he informs me that he is now the cook of his regiment, and has improvised a subterranean kitchen, entirely built and contrived by himself, which he describes to me in fine academic style. Here he grills steaks for the regiment, set in rows on old bayonets. The stove—provided with a chimney-pipe fashioned by himself—is made out of the tin lining of a German ammunition basket.

To obtain this he had crawled out of the trenches at night, and, having picked up the basket in his teeth, dragged it back to his trench, keeping as flat to the ground as possible. This is one of the innumerable instances of the adaptability and ingenuity of the French soldier-citizen.

A quality which the French have gained in the trenches of this war, and which certainly heretofore has not been counted as one of their distinguishing characteristics, is that of patience. Their unlimited fund of this virtue is exemplified a hundred times a day to their officers. They realize that this is a war of temporization, and every combatant seems to have taken a lesson out of the book of General Joffre, known as "the Temporizer." Their patience is strong because their faith is absolute in their ultimate triumph, and is the outcome of repeated experiences, which have convinced them of their power of victory. But theirs is not a blind and stupid confidence such as animates the masses of the German army; the French are too critical and too much addicted to deep logical reflection for that. In the trenches they read and converse to-

gether and discuss events. And the object of their discussion is almost invariably the war which they are now fighting. They are patient because they have the impression that they are blockading Germany. It may be objected that the Germans boast that it is they who are besieging France; but the French *pioupious* will declare this to be untrue, and they will prove their assertion by comparing the fine white-crumbed, golden-crusted bread which is sent regularly to the French trenches, with a loaf of black, malodorous KK bread of which they often find pieces in abandoned German trenches.

And they argue from the particular to the general, and declare that the conqueror will be the one who can eat the better bread!

Their patience is inexhaustible, because they realize that the final result will be the sum of many added results obtained in many different countries—in Flanders, in Lorraine, in Poland, in Hungary, in the distant East, in Turkey, and in Africa—and that so great a war as this can only be handled slowly.

The soldiers make no mistake upon that score.

All the letters from the trenches go to prove the excellent state of mind and the healthy point of view of the French combatant. All letters declare "*Le moral est bon*," which is equivalent to the English phrase "We are not downhearted." The eighteen-year-old son of my country gardener writes to his parents:

". . . I do not know if the war will last very long, but while it lasts it is a most interesting life. I feel very happy to think that I belong to a generation which will not have missed it."

It must not be forgotten that among the minor though not unimportant factors which help to exalt the spirit of the combatant are the reciprocal love, devotion, and confidence, that exist between French soldiers and their officers. Perhaps even here may be found another fine influence of the teachings of the Republic. It is not in vain that one reads upon every Republican monument in France the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In the French army to-day the finest, most touching examples of the effect of this doctrine are exemplified. In the German army, the officers

inspire their men with fear, treating them with gross brutality, and scornfully sacrificing their lives in great numbers; the French officer treats his men as if they were his own sons, and their affection for him is filial. It is the personal influence of the officer which decides the *élan* of the soldiers under his orders. Any French soldier, of whatever class he may be, will explain to you that his love and devotion for his officer alone will make him go, happily, gaily, eagerly, to meet almost certain death.

But the spirit of equality and fraternity among the French does not imply familiarity. A characteristic of the race is that men of very different social classes can treat one another as equals without losing personal dignity on either side. Familiarity among French people does not necessarily imply a loss of respect, neither does it necessarily breed contempt. One sees this fact illustrated daily in the relations of servants and masters. It was evident long before the Revolution. Indeed, in the old noble families of France the relations between servants and masters who have been playmates in childhood together, are

those of affection and familiarity which in no way preclude either respect or dignity. In democratic France the respect of the lower classes for the higher is not based upon the consideration for a nobler family or a richer one. It is the instinctive deference of the more ignorant for the better educated—for all that stands superior in knowledge. The *pioupiou* looks upon his officer with the attitude of the pupil for the master, as well as with filial respect, which in France is totally different from the feeling between fathers and sons in Anglo-Saxon lands.

This feeling of affection is most evident in all relations between officers and their men. Nearly all the men that one meets in Paris back from the front emphasize this. Many declare that they would go through fire and water at a mere suggestion of their officer, and are entirely led by his incentive. Nothing touches the men more than the officers' *camaraderie* with them. "Why, Mademoiselle," exclaimed a working man just home for a ten days' respite, "our officers treat us as if we were one of themselves! When they are out of tobacco, they come and ask us for some of ours!"

But it is the paternal attitude of the officers themselves towards their men that gains the hearts of the French *pioupious.*

Here is a small anecdote that will illustrate my meaning; it is one of many hundred similar stories:

A Colonel required two men for an aerial raid that was absolutely necessary, but which meant almost certain death. He called his men together and asked those who would volunteer to hold up their hands. Every single hand in the company was raised. There was not one missing. The Colonel then decided to draw lots among the numerous volunteers. A few moments later the two men whom chance had chosen were about to leave the group to make preparations for their immediate departure, when the Colonel called them to him:

"When a man's sons go out to battle, do they not embrace their old father?"

And before they left, the officer folded them both in his embrace.

The spirit of fraternity between the soldiers of all social classes who meet for the first time in the trenches is of the same quality.

All soldiers of the same age, fighting side by side, use the familiar *thou* and *thee* in place of the more formal *you*, with the result that when an acquaintanceship has lasted some time, and two men begin to question one another concerning their personal circumstances in ordinary life, they are often amazed to find that often they belong to very distinct social classes. The following anecdote has been told: A very merry young soldier of twenty-five or twenty-six entertained all his companions in the "dug-out" during their free hours by his witty sallies, his amusing recitations and imitations. However downhearted circumstances might induce them to feel, the spirits of the men in that particular trench were immediately revived by the excellent fellow's fun. But one day he seemed sad and disheartened and disinclined to amuse the others. One of the fighters, a special crony of his, standing close to him in the mud, asked him the reason of his sadness.

After a few moments' hesitation, "Well, old man, I will tell you," he said. "In ordinary life I'm a sort of clown in a third-rate music-hall. That's why I'm so funny,"

he added with a rueful smile. "You see, it's my business to make people laugh."

"Then, what's upsetting you now?" asked his companion.

"Well, I must explain: I'm married to the dearest, bravest little woman in the world. Since I've been off to this war she has done all in her power to make ends meet, and to keep herself and our two youngsters in food. Such nice dear children—a boy and a girl. And now," and his face clouded again, "she writes that the two little ones have got measles. She can't leave them alone—she must nurse them—so she can't go out to work, and the result is that they'll soon all be starving. . . . And *I* can do nothing to help them. . . . So I am about as miserable as can be, old man! That's why I can't cheer up the other chaps to-day. I really can't!"

His comrade nevertheless tried to comfort him, but without avail.

A few days later the same comrade came upon the merry man with a beaming smile upon his face, but with an expression of perplexity.

"Well, old man, you look jolly enough

to-day, I am glad to see. Perhaps we shall have you enlivening up the trench a bit this evening?"

"I've just got a letter from my Louise, confided the clown. "Both the kids are better—in fact, are getting on nicely. . . . But what I can't understand is a piece of news she tells me. It appears that the other day she got a letter from some lawyer-man asking her to call, as he had some money to give her. To her amazement, he handed her three one-hundred-franc notes, and told her that his client, M. Jean Breton, had instructed him to hand her a similar sum of three hundred francs each month until the end of the war. What do you think of that, *mon vieux*, eh? But what's puzzling me is—who on earth *is* M. Jean Breton? I don't know anyone of that name. Who the deuce can he be?'

The other man was silent for a few moments; then, laying his hand upon the brave fellow's arm, said:

"Don't worry, *copain*. I'm Jean Breton. No, don't thank me," he added as the other man's eyes filled with tears. "I'm rich enough to afford it. In ordinary

life I'm a rich and idle *bourgeois* and have a hundred thousand francs a year of my own to spend. I shall be more than repaid if you'll sing us one of your comic songs this evening. Will you?"

III

THE INFLUENCES OF THE WAR UPON NATIONAL CHARACTER

THE sudden reawakening of patriotism, brought about by the equally sudden attack of Germany, has caused a profound alteration in the character of the French. It cannot be said too often that this is an upheaval of the French soul, not a transformation. It is not even a renovation, but merely a modification which has led to the resurrection of all the older French characteristics. Nothing has been essentially altered, but the passions which had so long remained dormant in the soul of the French people, and which have suddenly been called into active being, have re-arisen once more, and have submerged more recently developed convictions of a purely intellectual kind.

For after forty-four years of peace, the French nation had allowed itself to become interested in things other than the actual defence of the country. It had believed itself to be in complete security, and all its tendencies had been directed towards the perfecting of individualism. But these speculations had been mostly superficial, because they were created by the intellect and the reason of the nation, whereas all those heroic qualities which had remained beneath, and which had lain dormant for so many years, were of the passions and emotions. As soon as the sudden shock of invasion reawoke these sleeping instincts, they arose at once, and, like giants refreshed by slumber, sprang into fierce activity. All the more rational characteristics were instantly submerged by their rampant force. The French, long divorced from religious convictions, had made a cult of Reason and erroneously believed that the rational was stronger than the emotional. How quickly they perceived their error! The spirit of France at this hour resembles in no way the spirit of France of "the days before the War."

The amazing change which disconcerts

the friends of the nation, and makes her appear almost inexplicable in their eyes, must seem still more amazing to her enemies. In spite of their thousands of spies of all classes and conditions of people whose business it was to study, to observe, and to fathom the French character, the Germans had not the slightest knowledge of what was really in the soul of the people. Being, in spite of all their vaunted *Kultur*, an indiscriminating race, the Germans could understand nothing but what was superficially obvious. They had judged French character in its most frivolous—one might almost say most childish—aspect, and taken as indicative of the whole only what were in reality the most superficial mannerisms of a very small and jaded class of idle society folk. To be just even to our enemies, it must be admitted that one of the idiosyncrasies of the French temperament is to mislead and confuse those who seek to probe it. A whimsical spirit seems to animate the people of France, and to lead them to show only their more trivial feelings, as if a certain bashfulness withheld them from revealing their true depths.

In reality, they possess a sort of curious restraint that urges them to withhold their inner and deeper emotions from the too inquisitive gaze of the outsider, and to conceal these beneath an apparent brilliancy of gaiety. A Frenchman laughs and mocks at sentimentality in fear of its domination. In reality, all the hidden strength of his soul lies in sentiment, and if the observer, however patient, cannot realize this truth he will ever be misled. This often assumed gaiety confuses the ponderous Teutonic investigator straining every effort to understand the French nation; and if the apparent lightness of disposition which alone is evident is the only thing that impresses him, the fault lies, not with the man under observation, but with the observer.

All Europe has been impressed by the subdued calm of the French nation since the first hour of hostilities; for though the superficial emotions of the race usually express themselves in noisy gesticulations, the keener and profounder elation of the spirit is silent.

The attack was so sudden, and the reawakening of patriotism so instantaneous,

that it occupied all the forces of the individual. In face of the stupendous shock of the attack, the immediate necessity was for action, and all the forces of each individual were necessarily employed in preparing for that action, the first manifestation of which was the spontaneous union of all parties, of all convictions, and of all tendencies, within the nation. This *Union Sacrée* was accomplished, as if by magic, within the space of a few hours, as soon as it was made known throughout the land that war was to be. Then every French man and every French woman, and even every French child, felt that the limitations which divided their own personal convictions from those of their compatriots had suddenly faded into nothingness, like mountain mist before the rising sun.

What mattered the mere ticketing of groups in this hour of national anguish and alarm? Of what importance was it that one was labelled Reactionary, another Nationalist, another Republican, and yet another Socialist? What mattered all these distinctions now? For was not each in-

dividual of the nation, essentially and before all other things, a *Frenchman?* That is what became so evident to one and all on Saturday, August 1st, at the hour when the news for mobilization was spreading.

It was at that moment that every Frenchman knew that, even before he was a husband and a father, he was a fervent soldier of his country, and understood that the ideal of *la Patrie* was higher still than that of the family, for *la Patrie* is but the wider and greater family. No just man of any nation, who witnessed the attitude of the French of all classes at that hour, would dare to suggest that the men of France crowded to the flag because legally they were forced to do so under penalty of death. It would be most unjust to the soldier-citizens of France to believe that a single one of them acted under compulsion. One may safely assert that, in the entire nation, not a single man who left his home the morning following the national appeal believed that he was obeying a law. He was confident that he was following his own personal impulse only.

And the proof is that, although the actual

call to arms was only officially made on August 1st, hundreds of civil combatants, besides those officers of the regular army whose duty it is to be always at their posts, had already voluntarily joined their corps, so eager were the citizen-soldiers of France to defend their country.

As soon as mobilization was decreed, the French soul was immediately renewed, frivolity was done away with and disappeared altogether. The people became grave and serene. In Paris and the larger towns, the theatres, museums, all centres of amusement, and all *commerces de luxe*, were closed, and all self-indulgent comforts renounced. It was evident that all French citizens—men, women, and children—had joined the army in spirit, as soon as war had become the general topic of thought. An implicit and utter subservience to those who had undertaken to defend the country was observable, more especially to the military authorities, who had immediately assumed the responsibility of all arrangements. And this without orders or edicts or warnings or notices from headquarters, or from any directing

authority. Perhaps for the first time in their history, the French people found within themselves an obscure and hitherto totally unknown force, which prompted them to govern themselves. They needed neither leaders nor teachers. This complete observance of law and order was the more amazing, in that the French are usually the most unruly and insubordinate of races. To observe each citizen discipline himself without the slightest outside direction or compulsion was almost as astonishing as to see the unusual self-control of all. Truly it may be said that the France of 1914 was well worthy of herself in the most glorious hours of her history.

This says much in favour of the personal discipline which Republican ethics had inculcated. In spite of the many faults of the Republic—in spite of its abuses, of its nepotism, and of its egotistical parliamentarism; in spite of its many internal divisions and its discrepancies—a form of government which can thus inspire a nation with so sane a conception of its individual freedom and responsibility, carries within itself some fine potential qualities. Perhaps

later the historians who study our epoch will agree in declaring that the magnificent and spontaneous heroism of the people in these days, and more especially of that portion of the nation uninfluenced by religious ideals, was inspired by those rational Republican teachings which claim to replace religious faith in the hearts of so many of the present generation. What is certain is that the education of reason, which the Republic had so earnestly extolled, stood in lieu of a religious ideal to its upholders in this hour.

It was this education of reason, too, absorbed and assimilated by the natural intelligence of the nation, which led it to realize at once the danger of the situation. The French people became immediately conscious that they must not act as quarrelsome children, but as full-grown, responsible men, fully aware of the gravity of the issues. Thus they proved themselves to be capable of leading themselves. Each individual undertook to answer personally for his own destiny and for his own free will, and each man led himself to a higher sense of responsibility

than he had ever before attained. A wave of heroic inspiration swept over the country at that moment.

And so conscious were all citizens of the intensity of the hope that had suddenly dawned, that, even in spite of the terrible anxiety for *la Patrie*, each individual was happy to have lived in such pregnant hours. For each man realized their importance, and was conscious of existing in a transcendent moment of his nation's history. On all sides, at this date, one heard regrets expressed for the premature death of such patriotic heroes as Deroulède, Picquart and Jaurès, who had died before the hour which promised the fulfilment of so legitimate a hope as the possibility of *La Revanche:* and yet who had not lived to see that which they had so passionately desired, and in which they had so ardently believed. It seemed as if Destiny had thwarted them of their rights.

It was because the attack made upon her was so sudden and unforeseen that the force which impelled France—all her will aroused—against her aggressor was so unanimous. And this proves that, with

nations as with individuals, no impulse is so efficacious in awakening them from torpor as that of an immediate and dangerous necessity. Like individuals, too, nations are not entirely conscious of their own potentialities. Even though France believed herself to be—and in truth was—of all the civilized nations the most critically inclined, prizing intellectual predominance above all the virtues, yet she has proved that she held within herself, in spite of the contrary teachings of her education, strong will, determination, and discipline in face of a threatening danger. These qualities still existed beneath the superficiality of mere intellectual ratiocination, and the nation found in her hour of danger that all the old atavistic forces of the race, the chivalrous and heroic instincts that had remained unemployed so many years, still lived, with all their strength unimpaired.

Like all nations liberated from immediate fear from the outside, France had allowed herself to develop a selfish egoism at the expense of a more altruistic collective spirit; but she now discovered within herself the conception of a greater and higher duty

and a larger scope for her activity. Thus possessed of a wider vision, she set herself to immediate action.

And not the least of those influences for good which this stupendous and terrible war has wrought will have been that it forced France to realize herself once more completely, as formerly she had been. As I have already pointed out, she is not a changed France, but the complete former France re-arisen. She is not a *new France*, but a *very, very old France*. Surely that has been amply proved upon the battlefields of this war? No country either of the present or of the past could ever improvise any sudden heroism of the quality which we see to-day. An old traditional spirit of the finest valour is necessary to reveal the qualities which our soldier-citizens have shown since the beginning of this war.

War time is a period of meditation combined with intense activity, and the modifications of character which these two states of mind have achieved are disconcerting. One might almost say that on August 1st of the year 1914, the French people were inspired

with a new religion—that of Patriotism; and the result which ensued marks a profound upheaval, not only in all their preconceived ideals and convictions, but also in their most inveterate habits. With the tolling of the tocsin, the most firmly established routines, and even, one might say to a certain extent, the moral values, in all families and in all individuals, were instantly altered.

At certain periods and in certain spheres of thought humanity lives in a condition of high pressure approximate to ecstatic being, when all the ordinary processes of daily life are unsettled and their order overthrown. Such was the coming of this war, that it brought about a modification of all habits and feelings, as well as mental convictions—all of which had to be immediately readjusted. Thus the very proportioning of the day's occupations was done away with. The order of the three daily meals, as well as the order of the sleeping and waking hours, was inverted. Men had to conform to an entirely new condition of existence from one day to another. Those combatants who were the most inveterately regular

in their meal hours, now suddenly found themselves forced to eat when they could—that is to say, often only once in every thirty-six or forty hours. They had to renounce and even forget all their material comforts, to lead the lives of troglodytes half buried in the earth, and to fight heroically without any thought of time or of the limits of their own endurance. Their spirit now so dominates their physical bodies that they seem to have forgotten momentarily that they possess bodies. Those who formerly were most fastidious with regard to their food now forget that there is such a thing as regular and well-prepared meals. Strangely, too, their physical health seems momentarily transformed by the new and strenuous conditions of their daily life, and many of those now at the front, who before the war were constantly ailing, or whose lungs were delicate, or whose propensity for catching cold was most marked, now cheerfully, and apparently without any bad results, face the dampness of the trenches for days and nights in succession. The weakest constitutions, which formerly could not bear excessive fatigue, and who when

at home were subjected to a special rule of diet, now seem capable of enduring any amount of strong exertion. And those whose bodies were racked with "nerves," and could not bear the slightest jar, to-day seem possessed of limitless endurance, and apparently have never felt in better health. A recent cartoon in the *Guerre Sociale* shows us three men dressed as uncouthly as indeed only French *pioupious* can venture to dress, crouching down inside their dug-out, drinking hot coffee out of tin mugs. From their appearance they have evidently undergone a fierce and lengthy bout of fighting, and are enjoying a few moments' respite. They are talking together as comrades, and questioning one another concerning their life before the war. One very fat and apparently aggressively healthy combatant, cosily wrapped in various woollen comforters, his face entirely unrecognizable under its hirsute decoration, is sipping at his mug with evident relish. "And what was your business before the war?" asks one of his comrades. "Before the war?" laughs the *poilu*, "Oh! . . . I was a neurasthenic!"

All luxuries and comforts being forfeited willingly, eagerly, joyously, the French citizen has become a better individual. Will this modification of his character be enduring? One wonders. But certainly the present tendency towards self-sacrifice and heroism can only be beneficial to the deeper spirit of the nation. The entire range of vision is modified during war time, when the lives of nearly all the male population are in peril. Since the war began, a wave of self-renunciation has swept over one and all; it affects not only the combatants, but the non-combatants too, in every department of national life. Those who are the most unselfish hardly seem to realize how greatly altruism makes for the betterment of the individual. The Frenchman in the mass was formerly a man much given to material enjoyment. He was a *gourmet* and a lover of ease in all its aspects. Now he has willingly sacrificed his love of personal comfort and his enjoyment of delicate fare; and though he does not realize it, yet, being for the time incapable of introspection, he has thus regained the moral possession of

himself. Among these unconscious heroes, there are many who do not yet understand what benefits will accrue to their individuality by means of the triumph of the spiritual over the material. Still, there are many who, even now, are aware of the transformation in themselves, and who inwardly have resolved that it shall be permanent, for they have fully recognized "the conquering force of the ideal over the material." It is the great and ardent realization of patriotism which now inspires the French nation that has revealed to many that "conquering force of the ideal." Let it be hoped that when peace has been made the re-arisen and revitalized ideals of the French will not be allowed to slumber again.

Besides the new conditions of existence which help in a great degree to influence the individual character of each combatant, there are other factors which will ultimately affect the French nation perhaps even more vitally than the modification of the personal habits of the people. One of these is the union of all political opinions and the bringing together of all the social classes.

Side by side in the trenches, living under exactly the same conditions and facing the same dangers, men of all convictions and of all classes, and of different degrees of education, meet.

Before the war the political convictions of the French were so split up and divided into sections that there were almost more political parties than could be counted. Nevertheless, it may be said that, broadly speaking, French political thought could be divided into two larger groups, which contained all lesser groups.

Group 1 included Reactionaries, represented by Monarchists, Legitimists, Bonapartists, etc. These were essentially the upholders of the army and the Church as the great governing forces of their country. Their enemies ranked them together, and called them the Nationalist party.

Group 2 included Republicans, Radicals and Socialists, and Freethinkers of all kinds, who place human reason above all other ideals.

A French writer once said that a man's political opinions were always based upon

his religious convictions. That this is specially true of France is proved by the classification of her political parties.

These two groups may be said to have divided France against herself, for, roughly speaking, it may be said that all Frenchmen belonged either to the one or to the other. Group 1 held that war, like religion, was sacred, and was a necessary force to maintain the integrity and higher consciousness of the race.

Group 2 was pacific and internationalist, and some of the more forward members of the group not only desired peaceful relations with their enemies, but went so far as to hope for relations of friendship and good feeling with them.

Each group believed that the salvation of France was to be effected by its own set of ideas, and because these ideas were conflicting and opposed, the two groups were enemies.

In addition to their political convictions, the partisans of Group 1 founded their theories upon an almost fanatical adoration of the past. They held that alone those forces that had made France great in history

were those which would still make her stand great in the future, so that the preservation of all the old chivalrous ideals was necessary to France's future greatness.

Group 2 believed that the old forces were effete, and therefore, if not to be entirely done away with, might at least be transformed, and that in the new era pure reason would dominate the forces of tradition. The old military ideals of glory and conquest were to be replaced by the ideas of peace and understanding among the nations. As for Religious dogma, it had had its day, been worn thin, and henceforth was to be replaced by Science and Reason.

As a matter of fact, the coming of the war proved that the two groups were not as distant from one another in their ideals as they might at first appear to have been. In the face of war they merged together in a simple and easy manner which surprised them both. Group 1 was amazed to find that their opponents of the weeks before were as ready to die for their country as they themselves were. Group 2 realized that, because Group 1 had made a cult of

the past, its members were nevertheless fully prepared to fight for the future.

It was upon the altar of *la Patrie*, before which they both sacrificed in communion together, that the two groups amalgamated and became as one. Thus, because of the war, and especially during the time of hostilities, all differences of French thought and conviction were annihilated.

And then France discovered that, at heart, not only is she a rational country, but that she is also a religious and military one. For the two ideals, religious and rational, sway her simultaneously. As soon as she was attacked, all her citizens rose in a mass as soldiers in her defence. Even the fiercest Socialists, who formerly had declared that in case of war they would rebel against military law and fire upon their own officers, forgot all their theories to follow only their patriotic instincts. These led them to fight with the greatest courage and bravery in this war which will end war, and which they declare is a war against war.

But since the mingled masses of the nation have withstood the test of emotional and patriotic fervour, a re-awakening of reli-

gious feeling has also been most perceptible even among those who had repeatedly declared themselves to be free from all spiritual belief. Whether this will lead eventually to a permanent revival of the Catholic faith itself yet remains to be proved, and will only be clearly perceived after the war.

It is not astonishing that a renewal of faith should have been manifested at the present juncture, when all the units of the nation are brought face to face with danger and death, when each man, married or single, sacrifices all family affections, all human tenderness and love, upon the altar of his country, and goes out to offer up his life in discharge of a national duty, thus giving himself altruistically for the benefit of future generations whom he will never know. It is not astonishing—indeed, it is profoundly human—that, sacrificing so much and facing death so heroically, those about to die should think of the hereafter. It is natural too that, while offering their life to their country, they should endeavour to discover within themselves what is the spiritual reward and sanction that urges them towards this sense of sacrifice. It is at the moment

when he goes out to meet an enemy that a man perceives within himself the existence or non-existence of a religious conviction. Even though, like his patriotism, it may have lain dormant within him for many years, he realizes, often to his own amazement, that it still exists. The women of the French nation have, broadly speaking, ever been Catholic at heart, and have conformed more closely to the rites of the Church than the men, who have sincerely believed that their human reason was stronger and more logical than faith or creed. But in a great crisis of national feeling, like the actual one brought about by the war, the men, like the women, often urged thereto by their mothers and wives, fall back upon these religious convictions as their only safeguard and comfort. They are astonished to find that they still believe, and their women are happy in the thought that they have always preserved their own comforting belief and have been able to convince the men.

In the minds of most Republicans, the greatest enemy of Catholicism in France has ever been Clericalism. If the priests had never sought to thwart Republican politics,

the separation between the Church and State in France would probably never have been effected. It is possible, however, that this great war, which certainly will accomplish much to modify and to alter the France of to-morrow, may also achieve what no coercion, nor legislation, nor political action, had yet ever been able to compass under the Republic — that is, the frustration of Clericalism as a force opposed to the Government.

For the first time in history the Catholic clergy have acquired a sense of citizenship. The Three Years' Service Bill, divesting them of their sacerdotal character, transformed them legally into mere French soldiers. Since the beginning of the war they have proved that, even if they do not pretend to uphold the Republic, they certainly intend to uphold the French nation. This has become evident to one and all—even to the most ardent priest-hater, since the men of the Church have been seen to go down with the other combatants of France into the trenches and fight like citizens and soldiers. This is the first time in the history of Catholicism that the priests have under-

taken the duties and responsibilities of mere citizens, and, side by side with men of the secular classes, have fought like simple soldiers for their country.

It may be said that they had no choice, that they were forced by law to perform their military service, as, indeed, it may be said of all those Frenchmen who are serving as soldiers to-day, and who are not of the regular professional army. But with the Catholic clergy, as with all French citizens, there has been no question of performing a legal or compulsory duty, only of performing a moral obligation. The priests who teach religion to the people, and whose persons for that reason are regarded as sacred, have momentarily put aside even their priestly character to become mere human men and soldiers. At certain hours, however, when the occasion demands it—when a combatant is dying and claims the comfort and aid of a minister of religion, the soldier-priest, hastily donning his sacerdotal vestments over his military uniform, hurries to the bedside of the sick man to perform his sacred duties. These discharged, he returns to the ranks and again

takes up his rifle. Often, even, he performs his priestly duties without vestments, confessional, or altar. A young *vicaire*, just back from the front, told me lately that, as the men of his regiment were marching towards the trenches they were about to occupy, the officers allowing their men to walk in groups and to converse with one another as they advanced, he found himself solicited on all sides by his comrades. Nearly all the men of the company came up to him, each in turn, to beg to be allowed to walk by his side, so that he could have the solace of a few moments' confession with a priest of his religion, before going to face death. At the end of the day's march the young priest's own head officer came up to him and begged the same favour that had been granted to his men. "I have been trying all during the march to get hold of you," he told him, "to ask you to hear my confession before we get to our destination. But each time I have approached you I have found you engaged in fulfilling your sacerdotal duties on behalf of one of your comrades, and have not wished to disturb you."

This general attitude of the priests and monks during the war has touched the masses more convincingly than any words, and has reconciled them to their old arch-enemies the priests, and thus to the religion they represent, more potently than any exhortation.

I am indebted to May Barry O'Delany, the Catholic writer of the *Irish Rosary*, for the following interesting anecdotes concerning soldier-priests in the French army:

Among the tasks allotted to one of these priests, a venerable member of the Diocèse du Drôme, was that of guarding the railway between Pierrelatte and Bollène. Whether in the hurry of the moment, or from some other cause, this good priest was unable to find a uniform to fit him; so, nothing daunted, he shouldered his rifle, and, with a *képi* on his head and a cartridge-box at his belt, went on duty in his cassock. He soon became a marked figure on the rails, and whenever a train passed, the soldiers, who were the usual occupants, rushed to the doors and windows of the carriages, shouting at the tops of their voices, as they waved their caps enthusiastically:

"*Bonjour, Monsieur le Curé! Vive Monsieur le Curé!*"

Another instance of priestly zeal took place in an ambulance at a Paris railway-station, where a hundred and fifty wounded were stretched on the floor on beds of straw. While dressing the wounds of one of these poor soldiers, the nurse, seeing that he wore a religious medal round his neck, said:

"Have confidence in God, and offer your sufferings to France."

"Ah!" sighed the soldier regretfully, "*le bon Dieu!* At one time I used to go to Communion regularly at all the great feasts of the year. But for the last three years I have not found the time. How I wish I could speak with a priest now!" he added in a feeble voice.

The nurse inquired whether there was a priest in the place, but was told that there was none. As she was turning away to attend to some other wounded, she felt her dress pulled, and, looking down, saw that it was held by a dying man, who had raised himself slightly and was gazing anxiously into her face.

"Madame," he said, "I am a priest, and

can give absolution. Place me near that man"—indicating the soldier who had expressed a wish for confession.

For a moment the nurse hesitated, for the priest's ribs were broken, and the least movement caused him terrible suffering. Seeing her hesitation, he exclaimed:

"Surely, you who have faith should know the value of a human soul! What does a quarter of an hour more or less of my life matter, when a soul can be saved?"

And in his zeal the dying priest tried to stand up and go alone to his sick comrade's side. But his strength failed him, and he had to be lifted on to a stretcher. His body bent in two from pain, and the sweat pouring down his drawn face, he bit his lips to keep himself from moaning outright.

The confession was necessarily brief, for the priest's strength was failing fast, and the penitent, too, was in great pain. When the moment for giving absolution came, the priest asked the nurse to hold up his arm, as he had not the strength to do it unaided, and, thus assisted, he signed the cross over the bowed head of the wounded soldier. A few moments later the priest

died, after asking for the prayers of those near him, and with the word "Heaven!" on his lips.

Apropos of the revival of religious feeling since the war, it may be interesting to quote here from an article, which appeared in November, 1914, by Paul Bourget, of the French Academy, who in the *Écho de Paris* so eloquently defends the cause of the Church and Army, which he calls the Forces of the Past:

"This expression," he says, "has often been used in a disdainful sense by the Prophets of Progress, or, to speak the pseudo-scientific jargon of the day, 'the Prophets of Evolution'! They would have us believe," pursues the *Académicien*, "that a new human being has just been born over whom the older discipline can have no power. Such secular institutions as the Church and Army are worn out, effete. That these forces of the past might also be the perennial forces of the future had not occurred to them. To their mind there were no such things as perennial forces. To admit that certain conditions of human nature are immutable, because of certain

social conditions, would be to admit the principle of traditionalism. Is the man of to-day born beneath another sky, upon another earth, with another body, another soul, another intelligence, other passions and needs, for it to be necessary to create another society for him? Has not the war sufficiently proved to us how wrong these enlightened scorners of the forces of the past have been? For it is to these forces that the French nation appealed for help when she felt herself threatened to the quick. It is these forces which are now working for us, that have emerged from out of the chaos of false ideals which had pretended to replace them.

"Look at the France of to-day and the France of six months ago. It was in May, if you remember, that all men were preparing to vote. Who would dare to declare that those elections were not important? From them a Parliament has arisen. What is that Parliament doing? Where does it sit? Who troubles about it? No one—except to express a fear that it may be called together some day! That fear is expressed unanimously: 'Let it meet for the sake of

mere form, if need be, but let it remain silent!'

"What has now become of the international fellowship of working men, which at the first opportunity was expected to rise in protestation, and in a great spirit of unanimity was to paralyze all efforts at mobilization? What has become of those programmes of a general strike and appeals to arbitration? But it is as useless to enumerate these so-called Forces of the Future, which to-day are forgotten in the tragic and decisive crisis we are now passing through, as it would be to appeal to the Constitution which rules us, and which is as indifferent to us as are the politicians who represent it.

"Never has any theory of ideas disappeared more fantastically than theirs, fading away like a transformation scene, to leave in its place those Forces of the Past which have proved themselves to be the only living ones, and which are the Army, the Church, and Eternal France.

"Firstly the Army, the real traditional Army. Not that species of militia dreamed of by the Utopians, who demand, like the

Republican Deputy under the Empire, 'soldiers purified of all military spirit.' The Army now fighting for us so heroically upon the eastern and northern frontier is a truly military Army, led and commanded by professional officers, who practise passive obedience.

"For our soldiers of 1914 are exalted by the deepest of human sentiments, which sustain them and will make them invincible—the horror of invasion, the virile anger at the sight of an enemy in their own homes, and the heroic desire to turn out the invaders. That the Belgians, our companions in arms, are governed by a monarchy affects our soldiers but little. Neither do they care that England has a King and a chamber of Lords, nor that the Czar of Russia is an autocrat. Belgians, English, Russians, are on our side, and that suffices. Let each use the particular form of government that suits them best, so long as they help us to turn out the Germans. Our soldiers are soldiers, and that is all—courageous men who kill their enemies and brave Death themselves, according to discipline and for the sake of the flag and

the frontier. You remember the hymn of anarchy:

"'We will strike down all frontiers . . .'

"Is it true that these impious words have been spoken? Yes, they have, and perhaps by the very men who now fight so bravely in the line of battle. The Army has won them back again, and has recast their souls. The Forces of the Past have re-created a new vitality for them—that true vitality, filled with immortal emotion, which was that of our ancestors, and will be that of our descendants. So long as there shall be soldiers, they will think and feel thus; and soldiers themselves will exist so long as there is a mother-country to defend.

"And so long as there shall be human suffering, there will also be Churches—*the* Church; for the Church is primordially a power of the past. As soon as the tocsin of mobilization had sounded, where did the wives and mothers of France crowd to? To the *Mairie*? To the House of the People? No, to the House of God—to implore Him whom their naïve lips, epitomizing, in a sigh, all the fervour of suffering

humanity, call humbly, tenderly, passionately, 'Our Father.' To whom do they appeal for strength in their sacrifice? To Him who sacrificed upon Calvary, to the Voluntary Victim, whose poignant and sublime words are repeated each day at all the altars of the Churches: 'This is My Body which was given for you. This is My Blood which was shed for you.' And sons followed their mothers, husbands their wives, and military uniforms were mingled with the black dresses of the women, beneath the secular arches from which violent fanatics had undertaken to drive away all worshippers. Where is the so-called Catholic plot now? It exists in the conspiracy of all those devotions, hungry for hope; of all those distresses, eager for consolation. And who was it who had combined this so-called plot? The priests? They are out there too, at the front, fighting. There are hardly any left for us now in the Churches and the confessionals. You may seek no further than in the human soul itself, the explanation of a restored faith. It may appear disconcerting to your philosophies; but your philosophies, like your politics, were at fault, as

was your conception of the French nation and of its future. France is Catholic, as she is military, because she was born so and so has developed. Each time that a mortal enemy has attacked her, those two energies—the Church and the Army—the profoundest and most intimate of our national existence, will rearise, and with reflex action will leap to an instinctive and irresistible defence. You may denounce the military peril and the clerical peril, but the Church and the Army will save you, even you, their persecutors, because you are men of France. They will save you in that very moment when you had dreamed of resuming your abominable campaign which has deprived so many hospitals of their Sisters of Mercy and so many regiments of their officers.

"But no, surely I am making a mistake. . . . You only repeat those words of hatred automatically; you do not really believe them. This war has taught you how deeply you love your country. She possesses none too many of her forces to oppose her formidable neighbours. You will not wish to diminish a single one of them. You will not speak disparagingly of the Forces of the

Past, because they are national, and they are the forces, too, of the present and of the future. You will let them work freely, to build up a strong France for us that will have no cause to fear future invasion. This is not a vain theory of ideas. The ruins of our northern and eastern towns and villages are there to prove it. Do you not hear their very stones imploring us: 'For pity's sake, let us have no more civil war! No more wars against religion. No more ostracism. No more clannish politics of sects or of parties. Let us be united, so as to be strong and so as to prevent *them* from ever returning."

Nevertheless, the barriers which have divided French atheists and freethinkers from the more convinced and practising Catholics have never been so strong or so invincible as rationalists have themselves believed them to be. It must not be forgotten—and this is precisely the truth which the war has led the more advanced Socialists and freethinkers to perceive—that the very civilization of France itself was established upon Catholic teachings and morals which throughout the generations have become

almost innate in the race. This is abundantly proved to the observer of France's moral and ethical progress. Even when under the sway of advanced Republicanism, even when most ferociously rebellious against the dominion of Clericalism used as a rival political power against the Republic, France retained at heart, unconsciously, the religious *morale* first inculcated by the Church, and this in spite of the fact that she had outwardly rejected all religious forms and dogma; for all the traditional morals of the nation are based upon Catholicism. Many of those Republican bourgeois families who call themselves freethinkers, and sincerely believe themselves to be entirely delivered from all religious and so-called fanatical errors, are often precisely those whose family traditions and whose basic ethical convictions are established upon the teachings of the Church itself, even though the purely dogmatic elements of the Faith have passed away. That even the most advanced Republican unbelievers still retain their confidence in the civilizing efficacy of the Catholic religion is proved, too, by the fact that in

those barbaric Eastern communities which they seek to dominate, they still use their Church and their priests as agents of civilization.

The inherent influence of the Catholic religion is such that, even after the forms and ceremonies of the cult itself have been rejected, the ethics which the Church has inculcated still remain. And these are sufficiently vital in the soul of the nation, not only to preserve the *morale* they have taught, but to convince even their detractors of their unimpaired power. Even so-called rational civilization has progressed along the lines of the moral teachings of the Church, and though those spiritual forces are deprived of the outward forms and ceremonies of Catholic dogma, yet Catholic methods of thought still subsist and prevail because they have been indelibly stamped upon the mind of the nation.

In this hour of her great struggle for the maintenance and supremacy of French civilization, it is evident that it is upon a strong moral basis that the opposing strength of the nation is built; for in one and all alike, whether their resistance be founded upon a

religious faith or upon Republican and atheistic convictions, the spirit of determination is the same. We are told that the Catholic priests in the trenches are amazed to note the fervour and eagerness of those who fight for their country without religious incentive or without any hope of a future life. But whether he be a believer or not, the Frenchman in the trenches feels that he is fighting for an ideal. He is defending not only his country, but also his home, his hearth, his family; and though he does not offer up a prayer before he begins to fight, yet he gives his life with the same reckless generosity and with the same *élan* as his comrade who recommends himself to God before he loads his rifle. The ideal of *la Patrie* is the altar upon which both make sacrifice.

The godless product of Republican doctrines watches with awe and respect his comrade of the trenches die with a smile upon his lips, because he is so convinced that a new life, more radiant and more hopeful, awaits him on the other side of Death. And the free-thinker's respect for his comrade is increased. So, even though far separated by their inner convictions during

their lives, the two men are very near to one another through their common heroism in the hour of their death, side by side. And it is because of such everyday occurrences in the trenches of this war that all Frenchmen have realized how far, even above all dogma, is the religious cult that a man has for his country.

It is evident, too, that the great union between all Frenchmen at the present hour is largely owing to the conditions of military service now existing in France. Never before had one realized how important a factor in the building up of national character was military service in its compulsory form.

By bringing together young men of all social classes and of diverse trainings, and by forcing them to live the same life of work, discipline, and devotion to duty, for two or three years side by side, a spirit of equality has been bred amongst them, which in itself has been a good preparation for the work of the war. In spite of the faults of which the Republic is accused, even its worst enemies must recognize that it has in a measure attained some of its ideals of Liberty,

Equality, and Fraternity. In spite of the many errors of parliamentarism and cheap *arrivisme*, Republican ethics have helped to fashion a modern French soul that has certain very fine characteristics. One of these is the true and sincere spirit of fraternity which we see exemplified to-day in the trenches.

Even the most advanced of Socialists cannot fail to be satisfied with the work thus accomplished in bringing together the various classes. For whatever else may eventually grow out of this union, there is no doubt that, at the present moment, it comes near—perilously near some will say—to the philosophical hopes of our good old dreamers, the Anarchists and the advanced Socialists. To-day, in the trenches before the enemy of the nation, Frenchmen of all classes, of all ideals, of all religious and non-religious convictions, have learnt for one another not only tolerance, but love and respect, to an amazing degree. Having suffered and faced death side by side, shoulder to shoulder, realizing the same perils, men from all classes and districts, trades and callings, have grown to know and under-

stand one another—and, understanding, to love. This is Socialism in its most insidious form, and even those whose sense of hierarchy and military discipline demands that each man should keep his appointed place and position must admit that the great concord now brought about among Frenchmen will be difficult to destroy. Class hatred has disappeared as if by magic; the *sale bourgeois* who has left his comfortable home to go out and fight side by side in the mud of the trenches with the *ouvrier* employed in his own factory, cannot consider him as an inferior, but as a brother, when he sees the simplicity with which the working man so spontaneously offers up his life for his country. And the working man himself will forget all his envy and all his personal grievances against the *sale bourgeois*—his employer—when he finds him shooting by his side, for he, too, admires the courage and devotion of his fellow-fighter. And what atheist exists to-day who will seek to deny the efficiency of the Catholic priests, standing in soldiers' uniforms and doing their duty, or fail to admire their pious fervour? And what priest will

dare to doubt the ideals of the freethinker, even though those ideals have been learned in the godless Republican schools, when he shows himself so great a hero in face of death? Will not the *Grand Seigneur*, too, however convinced he may be of his rights and his privileges, feel a strong impulsive fraternity for his poorer brother-worker who offers his life so generously? Surely, after the war is over, no great noble of France will dare to refuse a share of the benefits of his country to his poorer compatriots who have so eagerly accepted their share of the national burden of danger! To-day Frenchmen realize that their common love for their country has made all the men of the nation equal. Surely Socialism could accomplish no more!

So far as the French Socialists, as a political group, are concerned, they have taken up a most noble attitude in this war. Without hesitation they joined their corps as a single man on the day that mobilization was decreed. As Van der Welde, the Belgian Socialist, explained, this particular war is "a war against war," and must end all warfare for many years to come.

Perhaps one of the most convincing transformations of the Socialist spirit which the coming of hostilities immediately achieved was that of Gustave Hervé, the Socialistic anti-militarist, the leader of the Hervéists, whose articles in the *Guerre Sociale* have become so popular among all classes since the outbreak of the war.

Like so many other intellectuals, Hervé, before the war, held that the love of humanity was a higher ideal than the love of one's native land. He was an International Socialist, and sincerely believed that he had more in common with any German Socialist than with his nearest and dearest blood relation who might happen to possess reactionary *bourgeois* convictions. His record with regard to his opinions was about as black as it could be. He was a University Professor of History, and once, lecturing before his pupils, he had gone so far as to advise them to plant the national flag upon the dunghill! He had also publicly announced his intention, in case of war, of refusing to take up military weapons against his fellow-men. For thus declaring his convictions he had served several months in prison.

But as soon as the great banner upon which was inscribed the word *La Revanche* was figuratively unrolled, Hervé, in a passion of patriotism, forgot all his theories, and perceived but the one great evident fact: that his country was attacked, and that his duty as a Frenchman was to go out and defend her.

"*On veut égorger ma mere: je cours la défendre!*" was the simple explanation of his conduct, in the words of Théophile Gautier in 1870; and they were almost the same, too, as those of the Breton peasant I have quoted, when questioned as to his intentions, the day before mobilization was decreed.

For the mere mention of the word "war" immediately forged a strong chain between all Frenchmen, whatever may have been their previous convictions or opinions. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the chain was not forged at that moment. It was linked long before, but it was drawn up taut and strong in these stirring hours. So that the most intellectual and analytical race, and the one most devoted to pure psychic ideas, learned the great ancient truth,

which, however, to the present generation seemed almost new—that there is a force in the national spirit of one's country which is higher, deeper, stronger even, than any intellectual conviction. The French thought they knew themselves, had probed their own hidden psychology to the depths; but now they learnt that their analysis, however deep, had never penetrated to its true depths. This was the first great lesson taught them by the war.

But what will eventually emerge out of the vast melting-pot into which all the national characteristics of the French nation have been thrust by this war? Will a complete and permanent amalgamation of all classes, with their diverse convictions, thoughts, ideals, and principles, be achieved? No one can now say what the ultimate result will be. However, what appears undeniable is that, in the union of the various principles, a general mean has been attained which seems to bring us close to socialistic and anarchical tenets, insomuch as it has so far mingled the classes as to have levelled, at least momentarily, all kinds and conditions of men.

Not only has the union been complete between all parties, overthrowing all the barriers which divided political parties and the various schools of French thought, but the entire spirit of the nation has been uprooted. I have pointed out elsewhere a peculiar French characteristic, utterly unknown to the superficial outside observer, to the effect that the French possess a tendency to conceal what they feel the most deeply, and to reveal by exuberance and by gesticulation only those emotions which are merely superficial. This explains the attitude of the nation since the beginning of the war — an attitude which must seem enigmatic to many. That the French people, usually represented as being so easily excited, should reveal themselves so disciplined, and so resolutely determined to await the final issue, of which they have never one instant doubted, must amaze Europe. One finds this spirit in every section of the community, from the top to the bottom of the social scale. But what is most amazing is the little "talk" one hears. For once, too, the French nation seems determined to abstain from judging those in power. Since

the beginning of the war hardly any criticism of the Government has been heard. Still less has one heard the military authorities discussed. The whole nation appears to have made up its mind to follow Asquith's advice, and is resolved to "Wait and see!"

The lessons taught by the life in the trenches now led by all able-bodied Frenchmen are numerous and will be far-reaching. To what degree they will be indelibly impressed upon the minds of the people remains to be seen. One can hardly hope that the present level of high virtues and of heroism will be sustained. It would be to ask too much from any nation. For at this hour even our *apaches* and gaol-birds are showing themselves to be possessed of great prowess and chivalry.

There is a very evident renewal of altruism that runs through the whole French nation at the present moment. The combatants are not fighting for selfish and personal issues, but for the happiness, comfort, and success, of future generations of men whom they will not live to know. But apart from these higher moral qualities, the fact of fighting together as comrades has developed

qualities of endurance, of renunciation, of sobriety, of strength, of suppleness, and of accuracy, besides other qualities. It has also developed resourcefulness to a wonderful degree—that inventive resourcefulness which has ever been one of the most characteristic qualities of the French race. Indeed, this quality, as well as the adaptability of the Frenchman, always compares most favourably with the organizing spirit of the German, and leads the former to win in the end. Thus, in this war all that the Teutonic brain had laboriously devised before the war in order to attack their unsuspecting neighbours has been, not only immediately assimilated, but greatly improved upon, by the French. For it is a well-known fact that the Gallic race perfects the inventions of other races, although, curiously enough, they usually leave the commercial exploitation of their own inventions to others.

Many other virtues have been acquired, too, by the French in this war. Perhaps one of the most evident, and one which it is hoped will be retained henceforth to become a national virtue, is the collective spirit. All the French people who know

and have studied England had hitherto so much admired this virtue as an English characteristic. Until now the Frenchman was exclusively an individualist. Even in his sports he excelled only in those games which he could, so to speak, play alone. Thus he might show himself to be an expert in executing a daring feat with an aeroplane, but was inferior when engaged in a football match. And why? Because he lacked that fine quality of the Englishman whose sporting instinct leads him to "play with the team." So far the Frenchman had not learned this. He always went off to play a little game of his own, because he was above all an individualist. But now, in the trenches, he has gained the collective spirit. Until now his isolating individualism had led him to be capable of showing power and talent only when he found himself in opposition to another individual. And because of this defect the personal valour of the Frenchman was often rather detrimental than efficient. It is said that Napoleon, well aware of this national disposition, was fond of declaring that he preferred a bad General who commanded alone, to two

good Generals who did not get on together. But now Frenchmen are learning how to co-operate, how to "fight with the team." Nevertheless they retain all their spirit of initiative, upon which their own officers always rely. The English soldiers at the front in France have all observed this special characteristic of the French *poilu*. The French soldier can never be considered as part of a machine. Even though he is disciplined and obedient, his best work is given to the officer whom he feels to be in sympathy with himself. The affection between men and officers is another special trait of the French army. The men are ready to go through fire and water for the officers whom they love, and these rule their men, not through discipline alone, but through their feelings. Each nation has its special faults and failings. That of the French may be said to be an exaggerated emotionalism. But, by using this as a lever, the officers transform it into a quality; for French soldiers of all classes, whether professional military men or soldier-citizens, are mostly amenable to sentiment.

During the long vigils of this terrible war

the French soldier has also learnt to acquire a quality which, though less brilliant than many others he possesses, is yet of no less importance in view of the ultimate issue. And this is patience. Who, some months ago, would have thought that the excitable Frenchman would have been capable of the quiet, concentrated endurance he is now showing to the world? If one investigated and discovered of what this apparently newly acquired force is composed, one would realize that it is based upon an absolute faith in his capacity to win in the end. This is no blind unreasoning or self-complacent confidence, but one that is built up on deep and logical reasoning. In the trenches the combatants converse with one another (would they be Frenchmen at all if they were not addicted to the charms of *la causerie?*) and they know that the western battle-line is no less than 600 kilometres long. They study their maps, and their favourite remark is: "The longer the battle-line, the longer the battle."

So they know that it is useless to hurry, because the final result will be the sum total of all the separate battles won along the

line. Not one of them believes that the war will end before next year—if then! It would be as unfair to the combatants at the front as to the non-combatants who await their return at home to say that they are becoming impatient. On the contrary, their enduring firmness and indomitable persistence seem to be limitless. One hears on all sides that famous phrase which, to the ordinary French mind, is so conclusive, so entirely unanswerable—"*Il faut ce qu'il faut!*" And so to the end their patience will be indefatigable and unfailing.

But though the French will have gained much and learned much from the experiences of the war, assimilating as far as possible the characteristics they admire in their friends, or even in their enemies, and rejecting those of their own which they judge inferior, that does not necessarily mean that they will be entirely transformed. Many of their newly acquired qualities will not be permanent, and the French character will eventually resume its even course. And why not? Are not the men of France fighting above all so as to remain French,

and not to fall under the sway of Germany? And is it not from the sturdy depths of a very French soul that they are drawing the necessary strength and courage to brave their present dangers? In view of their virtues, who would wish them to possess others than their own French faults?

IV

THE WOMEN'S PART IN THE WAR

THE form of military service in France is such that it influences and modifies life profoundly, because each Frenchman is a soldier as well as a citizen, and because in moments of war like the present he is called upon to forsake all his duties and responsibilities as a husband and father, and as a citizen, in order to perform his duty as a patriot on behalf of his country. This system, of course, largely affects the women of the country, and this war will prove more conclusively than it has ever been proved before, what extraordinarily good citizens Frenchwomen become each time the chance is given to them to prove that fact. At the present moment in France almost every family in the nation is profoundly affected by the absence at the front of its male

members, and thus each family is deprived of its responsible chief. There are thousands of women in France who are forced to take upon themselves the dual responsibilities of father and mother, and in many cases those of the principal bread-winner.

We had known before that, when a Frenchwoman is left alone in life—a widow, for instance—she has repeatedly proved herself worthy of the task that circumstances have imposed on her. Thus, the mothers of French families not only perform their duties as vigilant and careful mothers, but also take upon themselves all those wider duties, concerning the direction of studies and the long-thought-out preparation for future careers of their sons and daughters, which usually constitute the paternal share of responsibility in the community. Almost invariably, the foresight, prudence, and common-sense, of the Frenchwoman, serves her well in such undertakings.

It will be remembered, too, that in the first stages of the war, when the Germans, in their rush for Paris, had invaded and

bombarded an important town, from which the Mayor and Municipal Council had fled, the only representative of officialdom who remained in the city was the widowed wife of the former Senator of the department. She had been most active in organizing the hospitals and ambulances of the Red Cross, and had also taken in her personal charge all the municipal registers, archives, etc., which had been left behind by the responsible authorities.

When the German staff entered the city to demand a large war ransom, she opposed them in person.

"What do you want, *Messieurs?*" she calmly demanded.

"We want to see the Mayor of the town."

"*Le Maire? C'est moi!*" was the reply.

The Teutonic officials looked amazed.

"Then kindly direct us to some member of the Municipal Council."

"*Le Conseil Municipal? C'est moi!*" was the reply of this heroic lady.

Before her moral courage even the officers of the Kaiser were forced to bow. And so splendidly did she defend the interests

of the town and oppose her authority to the demands of the invaders that finally they left her in peace, and quitted the city without the sum they had demanded. Such fearless heroines doubtless exist in other countries, but in this land of Jeanne d'Arc they always manifest themselves in a crisis.

It might be truly said that there are but two professions which Frenchwomen cannot enter, because of their inferior muscular power; these are the callings of the coal-heaver and of the furniture remover! In almost all other departments the women of France have repeatedly proved themselves capable experts.

It was announced in the French Press about March, 1915, that the English Government had made a call upon women for war service, and that a State scheme had been proposed to offer them some of the work which had been left undone owing to the absence of so many men at the front. But while the English Government made this appeal to women in the eighth month of the war, the women of France, on the very first day of mobilization, at the beginning

of August, 1914, had already spontaneously offered to replace the men in almost all departments of national activity. One is happy to note that the women of England not only frankly recognize this priority of Frenchwomen in all fields of labour, but honour their sisters of France accordingly. When recently interviewed upon the subject of the call of the State for women's service in the present circumstances, Lady Randolph Churchill declared that: "The women of England will now be able to do what the women of France had already done automatically and without the necessity of a State appeal."

Yes, besides accomplishing their woman's work in the home as heretofore, and besides taking upon themselves the responsibility of nursing the wounded soldiers of their country back to health, from the very first day of hostilities, the women of France had automatically and without any State demand, or even sanction, taken up the work of the men in every branch and class of industrial, commercial, and agricultural labour. Often, even though technical training or professional knowledge has been

wanting, the women of France, always so assimilative and adaptable, have been able to replace expert workers.

And it is not only because of their adaptability and power of assimilation that French women are often able to perform the work of competent and trained men, but because they are always the comrades and companions of their husbands. Seeing the men at their work, observing their methods, they take an intelligent interest in the processes of male labour. Thus, when a necessity arises, the wives can often replace their husbands, not only as mere amateurs, but with skilled and efficient knowledge. It is rarely that a French working man of any kind, whether he be a paper-hanger, a carpenter, a jeweller, an electric light fitter, does not speak of his work to his wife, explain it to her, and discuss it with her, so that French wives become used to the *technique* of their husbands' profession. Thus, lately the local paper-hanger was away at the war. But I wanted my country cottage repapered. His wife came and performed the job quite as efficiently, and to my entire satisfaction.

During the winter of 1914-1915 in Paris we have been forced to admit, however, that male furniture removers and coal-heavers were indispensable, for since the beginning of this war the difficulty of providing coal for the weekly consumption of Parisian families has been great. And this not only because the French and Belgian coal-mines, which are the usual sources of our coal provision, are under German domination at present, but also largely because of the dearth of strong men. For in flat-life in Paris few stores can be kept, and the kitchen coal-box has to be replenished at regular intervals throughout the winter. Many cases of colds and bronchitis and other ailments were therefore brought about by the absence of the strong, able-bodied men at the front. And the dearth of furniture removers is perhaps almost as tragic. The April quarter is generally most fruitful in "moves," and this year, alas! a great many women who, at the beginning of the war, lost their husbands, the principal mainstays of their households, were anxious to move at the April quarter to smaller and cheaper residences. Many

widows, too, wish to retire into the provinces. But the initial difficulty was to find furniture removers. I myself, wishing to make a change of domicile, applied to no less than ten well-known firms, who all answered that, not only had they a dearth of men, but that all their horses, too, had been commandeered, so that they can only undertake the very smallest "moves." As for the transport of a piano into the country, that is a piece of work which is absolutely declined by all firms, as only the youngest and strongest men can perform the work. On the other hand, in almost every case, I discovered that the offices of those establishments which still remained open were entirely managed by the women whose husbands were at the front. All the estimates drawn up and given for the removal were made by women.

But this surprises no one who knows Frenchwomen well. At all times, when circumstances have necessitated it and brought them face to face with material difficulties, Frenchwomen have proved that they can be entirely depended upon.

This attitude of accepting responsibilities

that have been thrust upon them by circumstances, and performing other duties than their own with the same foresight, activity, and thoroughness as their male partners, is not a new one. Throughout history a Frenchwoman has always been a reliable unit. And in all the upper classes of the *bourgeoisie* the women have shown themselves to be as adaptable and efficient in performing the work of their absent lords as the women of the working classes.

Not only have the women of France succeeded in replacing their men in mere numbers, but in many instances they have rapidly assimilated the knowledge necessary to carry on even those businesses requiring technical knowledge. There are hundreds of widowed women in France to-day who have taken upon their shoulders the responsibility of directing large enterprises where hundreds, and even thousands, of workpeople are employed. And it is to be noted that Frenchwomen never relinquish their more feminine attributes, and even their feminine weaknesses, even when they prove themselves to be remarkably efficient workers in all branches.

This war has shown the whole world what so many of us knew before, and that is that the virile quality of the Frenchwoman's character is a national characteristic.

Charles Kingsley has said,

"Men must work and women must weep;"

but in France, even when the women weep, they work also. And it has ever been so, though the present war has made this fact more evident to the world at large.

But, alas! the activity and the courageous responsibility of women do not prevent them from retaining their women's hearts, and the heroism demanded of mothers who sacrifice their sons and of wives who sacrifice their husbands is no less great than that of the men who go out to fight as soldiers.

At a lecture she recently gave at Rouen, Mrs. Despard, the sister of General French, said:

"Our soldiers, who go out to die facing the enemy, are heroes. We mourn for them, but we envy them also, for it is not possible to meet with a more glorious death. But the courage of our combatants is no more

sublime than the courage of the mothers and of the wives who mourn and whose lives have been sacrificed in the persons of their dear departed."

Truly the moral courage of the women who remain behind is as great as, and perhaps even higher than that of the men who go out to the front; for the woman have not the relative compensation of the excitement of the fight.

During this war we shall have seen French-women of all classes performing duties which hitherto had been exclusively performed by the men. Just as the richer women have left their firesides and gone out to work in the interest of the nation, either to tend the sick and wounded by serving in the hospitals, or by organizing relief societies to aid the poorer working classes and the refugees that have gathered around them, the poorer working women have turned out of their homes to supplement their husbands during their absence, and not only the women of the towns and larger communities, but also the simple peasant women, have all set to work to accomplish their duty as breadwinners for

their families. All over the country the work of reaping and of gathering in the harvest during the summers of 1914 and 1915 was performed by women. They even undertook the responsibility of the harder tasks which require great muscular strength. Thus, it was the women who cut the corn and heaved the great corn-stacks on to the carts, and drove them into the farmyards. Later they also conducted the threshing machines to separate the corn from the chaff; and if at the present hour France is the one combatant country whose bread prices have not risen, it can be well said that this is owing to the efforts of the peasant women throughout the whole land.

After the summer harvests come the autumn *vendanges* in all the large vine-growing districts of the country. Wine-making is one of the richest and most important industries of the nation, and in spite of the war the plain red and white *clairet*, which the French drink all over the country, as well as those rarer vintages which supply the whole world, had to be gathered in and made. Again it was the women who undertook to perform this

duty. Not only did they gather the grapes from the vines, but they also had to throw the masses of them into the vats and press them into liquor. This is heavy work, hitherto rarely entrusted to women. There was even a great popular and national superstition that the presence of women near the wine-vats would turn the wine sour! But in wartime such superstitions have to be set aside, for the women are no longer wives and mothers only, but are the supporters of the family, and they have to do the work of the men for the benefit of the community.

The winter passed, and there were still no male workers in the fields. The earth has to be ploughed and the new grain sown for the harvest of 1915. So it was the women again who undertook the work. One saw them in every department of France, their hands upon the handles of the ploughs, guiding them forward behind the horses over the rich brown earth. And then came the sowing time, and once more the women undertook to provide the nation with bread.

In Paris, not only have the women taken up all the work in shops, factories, offices,

but they have also supplemented men in almost all branches of outside work. The municipal methods of transport are almost all managed by women. On the tube railway-lines of Paris, the Métro and the Nord-Sud, the wives of the *employés* are working in their stead. At lower rates, however, alas! for the unjust principle of giving to women lower wages for performing identically the same work as men accomplish still prevails. But the wives of the Nord-Sud and Métro railways have been only too glad to accept three francs a day wages instead of the five francs their men used to earn! The female porter is as assiduous and as reliable as her male partner, and looks far more picturesque in her trim black gown and overall. She has no regular uniform, for Frenchwomen—unlike the English—have not devised any special uniform to perform their new work, but a scarlet band is pinned upon her right arm, bearing the initial of the railway she belongs to, and a white embroidered number is upon her breast. A serviceable and business-like leather satchel, which holds the railway tickets, is

hung round her shoulders by means of a strap. She is also provided with a murderous-looking instrument with which to clip the tickets of the travellers, which act she accomplishes with a most severe and martial air.

The tramway-lines of Paris also employ women conductors, and there is no proof whatever that these *employées* are in any way less efficient than their male colleagues.

It will be noted that a very great difference exists between the forms of feminine activity in 1870 and those of the war of to-day. In 1870 and during the siege of Paris, we are told that women were admirable in managing with thrift, economy, and foresight, and that many families were able to pass through the anguishing time of the siege because of the cheerfulness and goodwill of the women workers. Those of the poorer classes did not hesitate to wait for hours and hours in the *queue* at the butchers' shops where the meat was apportioned to each family, and many stories we are told of the fine courageous spirit of the women through all the difficulties of those days. The women of 1870, too, were intrepid, and

they kept up the spirits of their men like the women of to-day. But the consolation of the women of a former generation was based upon tenderness and sentiment, and there was less reason and less common-sense in it, and less science too, because the souls of the women of 1870 were less virile than those of the modern women. It must be remembered, in the defence of the woman of 1870, that feminine education at that period was based upon a religious faith only, which preached a doctrine of self-effacement and self-sacrifice to others, and did not encourage self-reliance, personal initiative and energy. On the contrary, these were discouraged as unfeminine qualities.

But it is necessary to remember that the French army in those days was not recruited from all the citizens in the land, as is the case to-day, so that the families of the combatants were far less numerous. Instead of every family contributing soldiers, there was only one family in every ten or twelve. There were, therefore, far less families vitally affected, and therefore far less women called upon to help in the work of the nation.

But the women of to-day have received an education which is totally different in its intentions and effects from that of their grandmothers. It is this newer, more modern education which has in a great measure helped them to refashion a stronger soul for the Frenchwoman. Our contemporary wives and mothers have not been reared only upon the rather narrow educational programme of the convent school, and even though so many Frenchwomen have retained their religious beliefs—and this has been abundantly proved by the evident revival of Catholicism during this war—the intellectual education of the modern Frenchwoman has been broadened, and made more far-reaching, being founded on a basis of science and philosophy. This newer education, while not depriving them of their excellent moral qualities which the older religious ideals had developed, has taught them independence of thought and action, and has given them personal initiative and awakened in them a sense of responsibility which has transformed them into able and efficient citizens. The woman of 1870, exclusively educated upon an ideal of sub-

serviency and personal resignation in the service of others, was perhaps a creature of superior sentiment, but of less character. She bred sons who were less hopeful, less enterprising, than those of the present generation ; for the mothers had known the humiliations of 1870, and from them their sons had gained their pessimistic outlook. But the generation of to-day is full of hope and vitality, and has gained much from the rational programmes of Republican France. The women's *lycées*, inaugurated in 1880, have produced feminine generations that have gained in character and individuality that which they have perhaps lost in gentleness and submission. Many men affect to deplore this. But, in defence of the new generation, one is bound to admit that the mothers, the wives, and the sisters, of the men now in the trenches of 1915 are more responsible and conscious citizens and better workers. This is proved by the fact that the women of modern France are now undertaking to perform their necessary and responsible work in the present circumstances in a scientific and business-like spirit which will result in a loftier and more perfect achievement.

The work accomplished by the Red Cross is a case in point. Many thousands of women of the middle and upper classes in France are now engaged in this, most efficaciously. The scientific and methodical training of the modern woman has taught her to be far more proficient in the work of tending the sick and wounded than were the excellent but ignorant women of 1870, who nursed the wounded or the sick with tender and easily aroused emotions only, but who knew nothing of scientific appliances or of antiseptics.

Beside hospital work in all its administrative and technical branches, the Frenchwoman of to-day is widely occupied in all kinds of social and sociological work; and in this, again, modern education has admirably prepared them to view social questions and to understand the methods of resolving them successfully from quite another standpoint than that adopted in 1870. Fifty years ago women understood such problems by means of their feelings only, so that their knowledge was necessarily imperfect. Now they can solve them in a more scientific, and therefore in a more rational, spirit. They

have realized that, to come to the aid of their poorer sisters effectually, their efforts must be based upon other conceptions than those of mere charity as understood by the giving of alms. They know now that what in their turn they must teach their poorer sisters is that the latter must organize and prepare their scheme of labour for themselves. To achieve this, all workers must realize that they themselves alone can be the responsible promoters of their own prosperity.

The *bourgeoises* of 1870 believed that to help the poor was merely to give them the money of charity. The women of to-day understand that they must know and realize the lives of the workers to be able to help them efficiently. To accomplish this is not to give them small sums of money now and again, but to give them work.

And by inquiring into the circumstances and conditions of the classes of poorer workers, many of whom are now left destitute through the departure of their bread-winners to the front, the society woman is brought into immediate contact with the realities of the position; and by realizing much of the lives of the honest and worthy

labouring classes, the rich and idle woman learns much. Not only do such relations establish between rich and poor a better understanding, because all alike share the same fears, anguish, and hopes, for their dear ones at the front, but also because, in practical touch with their poorer sisters, the richer women are able to realize the real hardship of their lives, which the poor so often bear with smiling courage.

Just as the union of all political parties, of all classes of thought, has brought about a general understanding between all combatants, and because Catholic priests, free-thinkers, atheists, Socialists, aristocrats, *bourgeois*, and men of all convictions, now stand side by side in the trenches and form but one great agglomeration of Frenchmen, so has the same union taken place between the women who stay behind. In a recent lecture upon the union of the rich and poor women brought about by the present war, Madame Jules Siegfried, the President of the National Council of Frenchwomen, says: "Rich and poor mothers alike share the same sorrows. The rich woman's anguish is the same as that

of the poor woman, for each have husbands and sons whom they know to be in daily, hourly danger of death. And when the rich woman goes into the home of the poor woman, she does not enter as a benefactor, giving of her fulness to the poverty of the other; there is no question of charity. But she takes the poor woman into her arms, and they weep together like sisters. It required a great upheaval like the present one to bring about this result. We had truly believed that we understood and felt the difficulties of the poorer classes. But we had not been in a position to judge them accurately. Before the war it was very difficult for us to penetrate into the lives of workers which are so hard, and to come into close touch with them. When we made an effort to do this, we discovered how deep was the gulf between us—so deep that we could not cross it, in spite of all our good intentions. Our own lives were so easy compared with theirs, for the material conditions of our existences precluded all worry concerning the morrow. They could not know our joys, either, nor share our intellectual or artistic interests,

because of the necessities of their continual labour. So our *élan* was stopped. We did our best to help, but we were forced to silence because there was no means of making them cross that gulf of misunderstanding between us. It has been this war that has allowed us to mix and to mingle as if we were all members of the same great family."

Besides the women of the working classes, the more serious-minded women of the upper classes, and the women of *la petite bourgeoisie*, there yet remains another class of women in Paris—the frivolous and fascinating society *élégante*, who for some lookers-on appears exclusively to typify *la Parisienne*. She is the only woman of France who is well known abroad, and erroneously, in the minds of all uninitiated foreigners, she alone represents the woman of Paris. Whether she be of the real *monde* or of the other, she is pre-eminently the woman who stands for fashion, luxury, smartness, charm, and all that goes to make the elusive illusion of feminine frailty. All the newest ideas, tastes, opinions, and follies, she adopts at once. The very name of

la Parisienne immediately evokes thoughts of beautiful gowns, original hats, dainty lingerie, lovely flowers and perfumes. Before the war the folly of certain *Parisiennes* in the struggle for predominance in fashion and smartness was indescribable. It may really be said that the period that preceded the war was a period of folly and decadence. The last few great social gatherings of May and June, 1914, have left an indelible memory of ostentatious pomp and riotous display. After the series of Egyptian, Persian, and Russian fêtes, we had the *soirées* in which each woman present was dressed to represent a gem. The garish schemes of colours and the vehement music of the Russian ballets were then most popular, and what was still more frantic and frenzied in shape and shade was the attire of the admiring women who sat in the hall. These, for the most part, concealed their own tresses with coloured wigs, pink, blue, green, or violet hair being then thought beautiful. Each woman present vied with her neighbour in composing a striking toilette that would single her out for admiration from among the crowd of other *toquées* around

her. One with beautiful feet, anxious to show them to her admirers and rivals, appeared with her bare toes exhibited, merely adorned with golden sandals fixed to the soles of her feet with strings of pearls and precious stones over her insteps. Ankles and toes were painted, pencilled, and powdered like her cheeks and her eyes. Others, equally anxious to strike the attention of all beholders, were clad from top to toe in sheathes of golden tissue split up at both sides as far as the knees, and wore long golden stockings drawn right up to their thighs. Others were draped in robes of the most original, striking, daring combinations of colour and design. Several, in order to preserve and reveal the slimness of their outlines, wore their gowns right on to their skins without any intervening *lingerie* or petticoat. And, needless to say, all that it was possible to show of their bare persons was liberally exposed.

And yet, in spite of these follies, all the so-called civilized women of the other large cities of the world were only too anxious to copy the styles of this class of *Parisienne*.

Then came the War. . . .

And suddenly from one day to the other, the frivolous, smart, fashionable *Parisienne* was transformed—or, rather, she found herself again — and, with a courage and an understanding amazing to behold, she set herself to accomplish her duty thoroughly. Where before all was disorder, selfishness, and folly, there was now discipline, altruism, and serious-mindedness.

So even the *folles Parisiennes* have also set out to serve their country, and in the hospitals, by the side of the sick and wounded and dying, one finds them now, simply attired in the white linen overall and long flowing white veil of the Red Cross sisterhood, doing their best to alleviate suffering and pain, and anxious to retrieve their past character.

And the domestic life of woman has altered, too, since the war, for the *Parisiennes* of all classes have now adopted new ways and customs. They dress themselves in severely simple attire, and those whose motors have been commandeered now exclusively use the "tubes" of Paris as a means of transits, attired in the plainest of dark colours. There is not such a thing as a

light-coloured gown or a gaily trimmed hat now to be seen in Paris. Those who are fortunate enough to have lost no relation in the war wear black or very dark navy blue clothes and simple black hats, so as not to offend the taste of those in crape veils and deep mourning. One of the principal dressmakers in Paris told me yesterday that the manufacturers have informed their customers that soon the stock of dark material will be entirely exhausted. As nearly all the woollen manufactories of France are situated in the northern and eastern departments, the German invaders have closed all the factories; and once the present stock now in Paris is exhausted, it will be impossible to find black or navy blue materials in France.

The light-coloured materials will then have to be put upon the market, and, if the women still insist upon dark colours, these will have to be dyed again before they can be used for gowns, cloaks, etc.

The lack of money, which is the direct result of the lack of work, is also largely the cause of women's forced simplicity. As the war wears on, one notices curious effects

of this general and national lack of funds. Women who before the war were able to afford fine furs, dresses, and hats, now wear their old clothes. Their penury is so great that they have not been able to buy fresh gloves or shoes. I met a friend of mine, in the early months of hostilities, dressed in a dark serge gown originally made by one of the first dressmakers of Paris, and a long cloak of Breischwantz, from a celebrated fur emporium. With these she wore a very smart black velvet toque. These were the residue of her former luxury, but, having no money now even to buy kid gloves and black boots, she wore the white cotton gloves and pale yellow kid shoes of the preceding summer—and this without the slightest false shame! She is far from being an exception, however; for women thus attired are met in dozens every day in the *Métros* of Paris. But what do they care—so long as their men win in the end?

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD, ENGLAND.